H.G. WELLS AND LANGUAGE

Thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

of the University of Leicester

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July 1991
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The thesis of this study is that H.G Wells had a coherent theory of language which derived from the most fundamental aspects of his thinking, and that this theory played an important part in his development as a writer. Throughout his life Wells was interested in the powers and limitations of language as a system of signification, and Chapter One traces the development of these ideas, particularly the way in which the psychology and philosophy of William James influenced his thinking, and suggests that in his early sociological writings, he anticipated later work in linguistics and psycholinguistics. The second chapter looks at Wells's approach to language as a social semiotic, and its importance in the communication of ideas, and it is argued that there was an unresolved conflict between Wells the social reformer, who wanted language to be unitary and universally comprehensible, and Wells the artist, who enjoyed the anarchic and subversive possibilities of linguistic diversity. Chapters Three and Four explore this dichotomy in relation to the social and the subjective aspects of language use. Chapter Three draws on Marxist and sociolinguistic theories to examine the language of Wells's fictional characters in relation to social class. Chapter Four, looks at Wells's approach to psychoanalytic theory and the linguistic construction of the subject, and this is explored in relation to various theoretical approaches to discourse and narrative. In the last chapter, it is argued that Wells's style cannot be discussed in isolation from his ideas about language, and it must be seen, too, in the context of his dispute with Henry James and the development of literary Modernism. The conclusion is that recent developments in narrative theory, particularly the work of Bakhtin, enable us to see qualities in Wells's realist prose which have been obscured by the Modernist aesthetic.
For Tony
I would like to thank members of my family for their encouragement, support and patience over the years I have been writing this study. I am especially grateful to my late husband, Tony, and to Catherine and Paul, who have gone to considerable trouble to search out materials for me. I am grateful, too, for the support of my friends. My former colleague, Janet Harrison, has offered encouragement from the inception of the project, and I have found my many conversations and discussions with Elizabeth Lewis and Amanda Hodgson over the past few years invaluable, since they have challenged and refined my ideas about language and discourse. I owe Gabriele Griffin a particular debt of gratitude, for her encouragement, for the intellectual stimulus of her conversation and for her very practical assistance on a number of occasions. Above all I have appreciated the help I have received from my supervisor, Dr Martin Stannard. At each stage he has assessed my work both promptly and with exemplary thoroughness, and he has always been prepared both to give advice and to talk over my ideas in a way which I have found both helpful and - in a very productive way - provocative.
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Chapter 1

Wells's Own View of Style and Language

In 1917, during a brief religious phase, H.G. Wells wrote a book called *God the Invisible King*. In the Preface he explains that the book is about the different conceptions of what is meant by the word "God" which have led directly to the "interminable controversies and conflicts" which have characterized organized religion over the centuries. The book goes on to explore two antagonistic and incompatible interpretations of the term, only one of which Wells is able to accept.

Eight years later, when *God the Invisible King* was reprinted in Volume 11 of the Atlantic edition of his work, Wells wrote in the Preface that in the "voluminous discussion" which followed its appearance, "nothing has so impressed him as the impossibility of getting understandings with people who are unconscious of metaphysical difficulties and who consequently use words with an uncritical confidence" (xi). The critics of *God the Invisible King*, he maintains, do not understand the nature of language. They believe that "the terms of human thought are solid, opaque and stable" (xi) and thus they have failed to grasp the fundamental argument of the book:

> Many people have evidently never realised that all discussion except the discussion of matters of fact is incurably poetical. Yet all terms used in human speech are either the names of definite facts in the common experience of men or they are metaphors, witticisms or a deliberate distortion or extension of such terms to express vaguely apprehended realities that are otherwise elusive. (xii)

This insistence on the lack of exactness in discourse seems at first glance to be at odds with the conversation with Joseph Conrad which H.G. Wells describes in *Experiment in Autobiography*:

> I remember a dispute we had one day as we lay on the Sandgate beach and looked out to sea. How, he demanded, would I describe how that boat out there, sat or rode or danced or quivered on the water? I said that in nineteen cases out of twenty I would just let the boat be there in the commonest phrases possible. Unless I
wanted the boat to be important I would not give it an outstanding phrase and if I wanted to make it important then the phrase to use would depend on the angle at which the boat became significant. But it was all against Conrad's over-sensitized receptivity that a boat could ever be just a boat. He wanted to see it and to see it only in relation to something else—a story, a thesis. And I suppose if I had been pressed about it I would have betrayed a disposition to link that story or thesis to something still more extensive and that to something still more extensive and so ultimately to link it up to my philosophy and my world outlook.

This exchange is often quoted as reflecting a characteristic stance on Wells's part, and most critics have taken Conrad's side in the argument. Statements such as this, together with Wells's claim that he considered himself a journalist rather than an artist, are cited in support of the view that he was fundamentally a philistine, uninterested in aesthetics or literary theory. The attitude towards language which the passage reveals has, however, received less comment. It is when he is contrasting himself with the writers he characterises as "literary artists" that Wells adopts what appears to be a blunt, no-nonsense attitude to language and style but, as the quotation from God the Invisible King indicates, when he is writing on the subject in other contexts his approach is markedly different. It is clear from his work as a whole that he gave considerable thought to the nature of language and the qualities of effective expression, but most critics have ignored this and have concentrated wholly on Wells's dispute with Henry James and his encounters with Conrad and Ford Madox Hueffer. When these passages are seen in relation to what he says about language in his work as a whole, however, they acquire another dimension.

1 Patrick Parrinder and John Batchelor are exceptions. Parrinder writes: "Critics have overwhelmingly taken Conrad's side, but I find Wells's argument equally persuasive" (H.G. Wells 14). Batchelor claims that Wells lost the quarrel with James on tactics: "...he was in possession of a defensible alternative to James's view of the novelist's art but failed to defend it responsibly" (H.G. Wells 159).
The section in *Experiment in Autobiography* which includes the account of Wells's disagreement with Conrad about style is entitled "Edifying Encounters: Some types of Persona and Temperamental Attitudes" and Wells, writing thirty years after the conversations he describes, is exploring his own attitude to aestheticism. In this chapter he makes an unequivocal statement; Conrad and Ford Madox Hueffer, he claims, agonise unproductively about style, whereas he (Wells) takes a more positive view: "I write as I walk because I want to get somewhere and I write as straight as I can just as I walk as straight as I can, because that is the best way to get there" (623). The assumption that it is possible to write "straight", to "just let the boat be there in the commonest phrase possible" (619), could be interpreted in a number of ways. So far as style is concerned, Wells's view seems to be that Conrad's writing is "as overwrought as an Indian tracery" (623) because there are too many words which call attention to themselves. In terms of language there is also an implication that it is possible to say the same thing in more than one way. There are a number of indications in Wells's work that he is, in stylistic terms, what Leech and Short call a "dualist"2 - someone, that is, who takes it for granted that the writer's ideas and the form in which he chooses to express them are two distinct things which can be discussed and evaluated separately.

This view of style is evident in a piece written for the *Saturday Review* in 1895, "Three Yellow-Book Story-tellers". One of these is Henry James, and although Wells is on the whole enthusiastic about James's short-stories, he is exasperated by "the thorns and briars of style" he has had to traverse in order to appreciate them. He quotes two passages which illustrate James's "positive distaste for the simple sentence" with the comment: "And everything he says here could be said as fully and with infinitely better effect in English of the normal pattern" (Parrinder and Philmus 191). It is not that Wells is averse to grappling with an obscure form of expression if he believes the content

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2 Short and Leech discuss this distinction in Chapters 1 and 2. Presumably the term is borrowed from philosophy's mind/body distinction. In general, linguists take a dualist approach whilst most literary critics tend towards a monist view. (See Ohmann, Babb 36-41).
requires it. In an article written in 1927, "Ivan Pavlov and Bernard Shaw," Wells speculates on which of the two men, the scientist or the artist, in his non-fiction, has contributed more to the world. He concludes that it must be Pavlov because, although the scientist is not much of a writer, and Shaw "writes English extraordinarily well," the former has had something of value to communicate whilst it is doubtful whether the latter "has ever had anything but himself to express" (The Way the World is Going 277). Admittedly this example raises other issues, and the value judgements reached by the article as a whole are not as straightforward as this comment would suggest, but it is clear, nonetheless, that not only does Wells consider form and content as separable, he feels that, when weighed in the balance, felicities of style, no matter how attractive they may be, count for little. Effectiveness of assertion must always be assessed in relation to the value of what is being said.

It is true, too, that in a great deal of Wells's writing, particularly when he is concerned with literary topics, it appears at first glance as though he takes it for granted also that language is essentially referential and that there is a stable external reality to which it refers. In First and Last Things, which is subtitled "A Confession of Faith and Rule of Life," Wells says that his attempt to understand his own consciousness must begin with the perception of a world of facts, and goes on: "I do not attempt to define this word fact. Fact expresses for me something in its nature primary and unanalysable"(10). From the example he gives, it seems clear that Wells's conception of "fact" rests upon direct sensory experience of the external world - what some philosophers have described as "brute facts"3

3 Wells definition of "fact" in this passage is in accord with that of the philosopher John Searle who, in Speech Acts, distinguishes between what he terms "brute facts" and "institutional facts". Of "brute facts" he writes: "One might say they share the feature that the concepts which make up the knowledge are essentially physical, or in its dualist version, either physical or mental. The model for systematic knowledge of this kind is the natural sciences, and the basis for all knowledge of this kind is generally supposed to be simple empirical observations recording sense experiences" (50). Institutional facts, on the other hand, are mediated through language.
- 5 -

- and facts are therefore unanalysable in the sense of being irreducible. "I take as a typical statement of fact," he writes, "that I sit here at my desk writing with a fountain-pen on a pad of ruled paper, that the sunlight falls upon me and throws the shadow of the window mullion across the page, that Peter, my cat, sleeps on the window-seat close at hand" - and so on (10). This passage is closely related to the account of immediate experience given in William James's Principles of Psychology, and, as I shall go on to argue, Wells appears to have been considerably influenced by his work. In Chapter Twenty, "Perception of Space," James describes the feelings experienced in a particular situation ("The sound of the brook near which I write, the odor of the cedars, the comfort with which my breakfast has filled me" and so on) and argues for the existence of an extra, superordinate sense which arranges these unconnected and indiscriminated sensations into "the one regular and orderly 'world of space' which we now know" (2: 146). Wells queries this claim, writing in the margin of his copy: "? An added sense will still be spatial, and whatever life (after death etc) there may be, will be spatially thought unless the mind is altered in kind, whatever the real nature of the life. Whatever is put into the mind comes out of space and time" (2: 146).

For Wells, then, the existence of a shared phenomenal world, experienced in space and time is a given. This does not mean, however, that he accepts the idea of unmediated experience, nor that he believes that language reflects this pre-existing world of facts directly and unambiguously. The purpose of the passage in First and Last Things is to present what appears to be commonsense view of reality, then to demonstrate that "the world of fact is not what it appears to be" (15). As I shall show - Wells pays considerable attention to the part played by language in mediating reality, and the distortions which can occur.

Wells does, in fact, write a great deal about language, although he claims no specialist knowledge. In an article in '42 to '44, a collection of essays published towards the end of his life, there is an essay entitled "Auxiliary' Languages and the Present Inadequacy of Human Speech and Symbols." In this paper, Wells discusses a subject which had been of interest to him throughout his career - the possibility of establishing a universal language - and although he had
kept in touch with developments in this area over at least thirty years he admits frankly that so far as contemporary work in linguistics is concerned "I am not sufficiently versed in these studies to know who are the essential workers in this field or the order of their importance" (137). It is true, also, that although Wells seldom sets out to discuss language directly, he could not avoid doing so even had he wanted to, because the subject which engages his thinking throughout his career - the crucial importance of finding a way in which men can live in harmony with one another - depends, in his view, upon the nature of human thought processes, the ways in which ideas are developed and the vital importance of communication. All these necessarily involve an examination of language. In a number of key passages in some of his major works, therefore, Wells focuses directly on the nature and function of language.

There has been considerable dispute over whether or not Wells should be regarded as a "great thinker" and it is often claimed that his ideas were inconsistent, even self-contradictory. Anthony West, for instance, asserts: "One of the difficulties of writing about Wells is that his mind was undisciplined, and that on any given point he can be found either to contradict himself, or to appear to do so" (Twentieth Century Views 13). This may be true as a general observation but not so far as Wells's approach to language is concerned, since his ideas on this subject are a logical extension of the most fundamental constituents of his thinking.

a) Language, Evolution and Civilization

Early in his career, Wells wrote two articles for the Fortnightly Review which, as Patrick Parrinder points out, "stand as a prologue to his social thought" (H.G. Wells 8). In the first of these, "Human Evolution, an Artificial Process," Wells pours scorn on the ideas promulgated in a book recently published, which suggest that the evolutionary process will in itself effect steady improvements in man's moral nature. After arguing that natural man's physical, mental and moral nature is substantially the same as it was in the palaeolithic period, Wells suggests that the manifest differences between primitive
man and civilised man must be ascribed to "a different sort of evolution
altogether, an evolution of suggestions and ideas" and this has come
about as a consequence of the acquisition of language. He concludes
that:

...in civilised man we have (1) an inherited factor, the natural
man, who is the product of natural selection, the culminating ape
and a type of animal more obstinately unchangeable than any other
living creature; and (2) an acquired factor, the artificial man,
the highly plastic creature of tradition, suggestion, and reasoned
thought. (Philmus and Hughes 217)

Wells sees language, then, as the means by which human society has been
shaped, a view in accord with later work in socio- and psycholinguistics
on ontogenetic and phylogenetic development. The Russian psychologist.
Lev Vygotsky, for instance, argues in Thought and Language that a
child's intellectual development is "contingent on his mastering the
social means of thought, that is language" and he goes on:

If we compare the early development of speech and of intellect -
which, as we have seen, develop along separate lines both in
animals and in very young children - with the development of inner
speech and of verbal thought, we must conclude that the latter
stage is not a simple continuation of the earlier. The nature of
the development itself changes, from biological to
sociohistorical. Verbal thought is not an innate, natural form of
behaviour but is determined by a historical-cultural process and
has specific properties and laws that cannot be found in the
natural forms of thought and speech. (51)

In Wells's second article, "Morals and Civilisation," published in
1897, he expands the idea introduced in the earlier paper; he looks at
the ways in which the "artificial factor" can be developed and refined.
This is essential, he argues, because "the whole form of the social
organization, the shape of our civilisation, is nothing more nor less
than the algebraic sum of the artificial factors of its constituent
individuals - a fabric of ideas and habits" (Philmus and Hughes 221).
By contending that this artificial factor is "the one reality in
civilisation" (218) Wells is affirming that man possesses control over
his own future, and has the responsibility for shaping his own moral
nature. This is a direct challenge to the influential determinist theories of Social Darwinism and Positivism which saw the evolutionary process as inexorable and therefore irresistible. In *Man Versus the State* (1871), for instance, Herbert Spencer had argued:

Misery inevitably results from incongruity between constitution and conditions. All these evils which afflict us, and seem to the uninitiated the obvious consequences of this or that removable cause, are unavoidable attendants on the adaptation now in progress. Humanity is being pressed against the inexorable necessities of its new position - is being moulded into harmony with them, and has to bear the resulting unhappiness as best it can. The process must be undergone, and the sufferings must be endured. No power on earth, no cunningly-devised laws of statesmen, no world-rectifying schemes of the humane, no communist panaceas, no reforms that men ever did broach or ever will broach, can diminish them one jot. (qted. in Oldroyd 208)

Other commentators believed, equally erroneously from Wells's point of view, that evolution was "a prohuman force making things better and better for mankind" (Preface to *The Scientific Romances* ix).

As has often been pointed out, Wells's thinking in both these articles draws largely on the ideas of T.H. Huxley (Parrinder, H.G. Wells 8). In his famous Romanes Lecture of 1893, *Evolution and Ethics*, Huxley had dismissed as a fallacy the notion that human beings would inevitably advance towards moral perfection by means of the evolutionary process and, what is more, had suggested that the origin of the misunderstanding was an unwarranted extension of terms:

I suspect that this fallacy has arisen out of the unfortunate ambiguity of the phrase "survival of the fittest". "Fittest" has a connotation of "best"; and about "best" there hangs a moral flavour. In cosmic nature, however, what is "fittest" depends upon the conditions....If our hemisphere were to cool again, the survival of the fittest might bring about, in the vegetable kingdom, a population of more and more stunted and humbler and humbler organisms, until the "fittest" that survived might be nothing but lichen, diatoms, and such microscopic organisms as those which give snow its colour....They as the fittest, the best
adapted to the changed conditions would survive. (80-81)

Language is a potential source of distortion and error which can lead to damaging confusion, although it is at the same time the origin of the "artificial factor" which makes civilisation possible. From very early in his career, then, Wells gives attention to both these aspects and is concerned with the fundamental importance of language in human affairs.

Wells's ideas about language fall into three main groups: he is interested in language as a signifying system, in the part it has played in man's historical development, and in language as a social fact. There are a number of important and closely-argued theories recurring throughout his work which he discusses in a number of different contexts. Many of these ideas anticipate later developments in linguistic theory, particularly those concerned with the nature of signification.

In The Science of Life, for instance, in the chapter on "Human Behaviour and the Human Mind," Wells and his collaborators conclude that Behaviourist theories must be supplemented by introspection in the exploration of human consciousness. He quotes from a book which describes the complexity of the mental processes involved in perceiving an orange, then explores the way in which this idea has been conveyed to him by means of the printed word. The reader is then invited to reflect on this process as it takes place within his own mind when he reads the passage; this involves Wells in an analysis of the reading process - how it is that words convey meaning to the human consciousness:

There you have this orange now in your mind, and so far as you are concerned it was conjured up by the sight of a group of certain little black shapes on the white page that need the most subtle discrimination on your part to know them for what they are. The key to it all is these shapes which make the word "orange". In the act of recognising them you are, as we have learned from Pavlov, actively inhibiting the associations of quite a multitude

4 Wells collaborated with his son, G.P. Wells (Gip), and Julian Huxley. In the text, however, he uses the first person. Book 8, which includes the section on language, was written by Wells himself.
of kindred words, Orange (with a capital O and a Roman arch),
orange (the French word), Orage (the Yorkshire writer who is now in
America), orang (utang), and so on. (791)
Wells had followed Pavlov's work closely, but the conclusions he draws
go beyond the idea of language as a directly referential signal system
and point to the arbitrary and relational nature of signification.
Expressed in terms of modern linguistics the word "orange", as Wells
describes it, is a sign which possesses significance by virtue of its
place within a system of signifiers and its value is determined not by
its own substance but by the ways in which it can be distinguished from
other signs. This passage, therefore, relates closely to the distinction
made by Saussure, who argues that in language:
...what we find, instead of ideas given in advance are values
emanating from a linguistic system. If we say that these values
correspond to certain concepts, it must be understood that the
concepts in question are purely differential. That is to say they
are concepts defined not positively, in terms of their content,
but negatively by contrast with other items in the same system.
What characterises each most exactly is being whatever the others
are not. (Course 115)

It is interesting that Wells points to differences in graphic
representation as well as differences in semantic association, and later
in the passage on the orange he suggests that the impression started by
the group of shapes on the page "passes through a similarly etched out
and defined sound record, the sound 'orange' reverberates faintly in
your mind" so that phonic differences are also activated (791). This
notion is closely akin to Saussure's famous comparison: "A language
might also be compared to a sheet of paper. Thought is one side of the
sheet and sound the reverse side. Just as it is impossible to take a
pair of scissors and cut one side of paper without at the same time
cutting the other, so it is impossible in a language to isolate sound
from thought, or thought from sound" (Course 111).

It is perhaps not surprising that Wells's ideas about language can
often be seen as related to some extent to Saussurean theory. Like
Saussure, he is not interested in philology - the central concern of
nineteenth century linguistics - but in language as it affects human
lives here and now, the synchronic dimension. As Jonathan Culler points out in his *Saussure*

It is one of the virtues of Saussure's theory of language to have placed social conventions and social facts at the centre of linguistic investigation by stressing the problem of the sign. What are the signs of this linguistic system? On what does their identity depend? Asking these simple questions, demonstrating that nothing can be taken for granted as a unit of language, Saussure continually stressed the importance of adopting the right methodological perspective and seeing language as a system of socially determined values, not as a collection of substantially defined elements. (51-52)

The comparison cannot be taken too far, however, because although Saussure asserts that "a language never exists even for a moment except as a social fact" (77), his theory concentrates almost entirely on *langue* - "language minus speech....the whole set of linguistic habits which enables the speaker to understand and to make himself understood" (77) - and gives most attention to the *system* as it exists synchronically. For Wells, however, the emphasis is reversed. He becomes interested in language from the point of view of *parole* because this is the basis of the "artificial factor" which shapes men's thinking and thus determines the quality of human civilisation. For Wells the social effects of language and the relationships which contribute to it are the primary facts of language; the system which underlies them is of secondary interest.5

Since Wells is very much aware that language "produces thought" and is indivisible from it, and that language therefore plays an

5 Despite his pragmatic approach to language, there is one area in which Wells adopts a structuralist view. His concept of the Mind of the Race is in itself a kind of *langue*. In a recent article on the linguistics of writing, Fabb and Durant point out that a cognitive approach to language - the one Wells espouses in *The Science of Life* - locates its system in the material world (it is seen as instantiated in the brain), whilst "The structuralist view allows the system an existence apart from the material world (*langue* would seem to have this kind of existence, instantiated in a group mind)" ("Ten Years on in the Linguistics of Writing" 65).
important part in the way men structure their societies, he gives considerable attention to linguistic development in the sociological books written at the turn of the century. Anticipations (1901), looks forward to the world as it may be in the year 2,000 and outlines the features of a New Republic. Mankind in the Making, published in 1903, discusses the kind of upbringing and education appropriate to the New Republican, and in his chapters on early childhood, Wells develops ideas which accord closely with those of present-day psycholinguists because he sees the child as an active participant in the process of acquiring language. He stresses too that language is not just the instrument of pre-existent thought but the capacity to mean. The whole of this section of Mankind in the Making, "The Beginnings of Mind and Language," is, in fact, strikingly similar to the argument which was to be advanced twenty years later by Vygotsky, in Thought and Language. Both writers lay emphasis on the close links which exist between the development of the child’s thinking ability and his/her acquisition of language, and both emphasise the crucial importance of social environment. Wells claims that humanity begins with language: "The body is the substance and the implement; the mind, built and compact of language is the man" (122) and he outlines what he sees as the ideal linguistic environment. Vygotsky makes a similar point: "Thought development is determined by language, i.e., by the linguistic tools of thought and by the sociocultural experience of the child....The child’s intellectual growth is contingent on his developing the social means of thought, that is, language" (51). Later in the book he stresses:

6 There is no indication that Wells knew of Vygotsky’s work in psycholinguistics. The first Russian edition of Thought and Language was published a few months after Vygotsky’s death in 1934 but was suppressed two years later and first appeared in English translation in 1962. Vygotsky’s systematic work in psychology began at the University of Moscow in 1924 and he died shortly before Wells’s last visit to Russia in July, 1934. When Wells wrote Mankind in the Making in 1903, Vygotsky was still a child, and yet the argument in Chapter 4 is strikingly similar to the one later developed by the Russian. The editors of the 1962 Thought and Language, comment that had Vygotsky been an anatomist, he would certainly have aligned himself with William James’s view that function creates organ (Introduction vii).
The relation of thought to word is not a thing but a process, a continual movement back and forth from thought to word and from word to thought. In that process the relation of thought to word undergoes changes which themselves may be regarded as development in the functional sense. Thought is not merely expressed in words: it comes into existence through them. (125)

In Mankind in the Making Wells, also, emphasises the indivisibility of thought and language: "speech is the common way, the high road, the current coin of thought....With speech humanity begins" (122), and in a striking image he describes the developing mind as: "the most wonderful of all conceivable apparatus, a subtle and intricate keyboard, that will end at last with thirty or forty or fifty thousand keys" (122). The inferior education received by the majority of the population is therefore a positive impoverishment not only because such people are cut off from sources of knowledge - "all they read is the weak and shallow prose of popular fiction and the daily press" (132) - but also because they do not realise what it is they lack:

The common man does not know that his limited vocabulary limits his thoughts. He knows that there are "long words" and rare words in the tongue, but he does not know that this implies the existence of definite meanings beyond his mental range. (133)

Characters in Wells's novels who have been denied - or have failed to acquire - an adequate form of expression bear out the categorical assertion in Mankind in the Making:

A gap in a man's vocabulary is a hole and tatter in his mind; words he has may indeed be weakly connected or wrongly connected...but words he has not signify ideas that he has no means of clearly apprehending, they are patches of imperfect mental existence, factors in the total amount of his personal failure to live. (134)

Artie Kipps is such a man. Throughout Kipps, Wells stresses his hero's inability to think through the circumstances in which he finds himself. His early childhood is circumscribed by the limitations and prejudices of the Old Kippses and his attempts to change his speech to accord with the demands of genteel society merely confuse him further. Attempting to explain anything involves him in a "Laocoon struggle"
(235), and the closing lines of the book show that despite all his efforts, the "gaps" are still there in Kipps's mind. There are feelings and the glimmerings of ideas which he will never be able to communicate because he does not have the language to formulate them, even for himself. In a boat with Ann on the Hythe canal, he tries to give expression to "the wonder of life".

Out of the darkness beneath the shallow, weedy stream of his being rose a question, a question that looked up dimly and never reached the surface. It was a question of the wonder of the beauty, the purposeless, inconsecutive beauty, that falls so strangely among the happenings and memories of life. It never reached the surface of his mind, it never took to itself substance and form; it looked up merely as the phantom of a face might look, out of deep waters, and sank again into nothingness. (424)

b) Language and Culture

Wells explores the importance of language in relation to individual lives in much of his fiction, but he believes that in this area the individual and the social are indivisible. In the Preface to The Scientific Romances of H.G. Wells he writes: "I have never been able to get away from life in the mass and life in general as distinguished from life in the individual experience in any book I have ever written. I differ from contemporary criticism in finding them inseparable" (ix). In The Outline of History, Wells stresses the crucial importance of language in shaping the culture of a community, and Chapter Fourteen, "The Languages of Mankind," draws on contemporary philology to outline the origins of language, at the same time drawing attention to its limitations. The majority of work in historical linguistics, he stresses, has been concerned with the Aryan language group because:

...it has been more familiar and accessible to European science. The other groups have been less thoroughly investigated because so far they have not been studied exhaustively by men accustomed to use them, and whose minds are set in the key of their structure. (93)

It is interesting to note, in the light of this remark, that at that
period, 1919, a group of American linguistic anthropologists, were engaged in studying the Amerindian languages; this was the first systematic scientific study of languages which had evolved independently of the Indo European (Aryan) group, and the findings suggested important interconnections between language, culture and psychology. In a 1929 paper, "Linguistics as a Science," Edward Sapir argues:

Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the "real world" is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group....We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation. (Culture 69)

Wells does not mention the work of Boas or Sapir in The Outline of History and seems not to have heard of it, but writing a history of the world entailed the study of widely separated cultures which had grown up independently of one another, and this led him to conclusions similar to theirs - that a language structures the thinking of the community which uses it and thus shapes its world view. In a section on "Human Behaviour and the Human Mind" in The Science of Life Wells argues that "most human communities have distinctive pictures of the universe as the common basis of their moral culture and general conduct" and he relates this to European languages. Having emphasised the extent to which education shapes human conduct he goes on to point out that all educators should

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7 Benjamin Whorf may have known of Wells's interest in linguistic relativity. After Whorf's death in 1941 a number of unpublished papers were discovered. An article in hand-written form, "A Linguistic Consideration of Thinking in Primitive Communities," written in 1936, included notes indicating that Whorf had intended it for publication and planned to send it to a number of people, including H.G. Wells (See Whorf 65n).
bear in mind that the distinctive picture of the universe passed on to the young in each human community is linguistically mediated:

No two languages have identically the same general terms and their grammatical structure also gives a preference to this or that method of grouping and correlating words. There is no such thing as an exact translation and so the framework of the mind of a Frenchman or German is subtly different from that of an English speaker. Every language and every tradition carries its distinctive tendencies towards this picture of the universe or that. (793)

It is clear that Wells sees this "picture of the universe" as a world view given by the language and culture that engenders it. His fascination with the Chinese language in The Outline of History shows that he would agree with Halliday's contention that it is misleading to pick out isolated lexical and grammatical features as representative of cultural differences. "Only the grammatical system as a whole," Halliday claims, "represents the semantic code of a language" (Functional Grammar xxxi). Wells draws attention to the "profound difference" between all aspects of the monosyllabic Chinese group and western languages. Taking the Pekinese form of Chinese as an example, he points out that since there are only four hundred and twenty primary monosyllables, meanings must be expressed in ways very different from those of the Aryan languages, with the result that: "Chinese grammar is a thing different in nature from English grammar; it is a separate and different invention....Consequently any such thing as a literal translation from Chinese into English is an impossibility. The very method of thought is different" (89). Again, Wells's views are in accord with modern linguistic thinking. In a recent article, "Ways of Saying: Ways of Meaning," Ruquaiya Hasan claims that "different ways of saying are different ways of meaning - obviously not the same thing. How we say is indicative of how we mean. And a culture develops characteristic ways of meaning. These ways of meaning, in their totality, are specific to that culture: they constitute its semiotic style" (Fawcett 105).

Wells believes that the "semiotic style" of the Chinese language has shaped the history of its people in very specific ways, and he gives
considerable attention to the Chinese system of ideographs. He suggests that the system of writing in China is so complex and takes so many years to learn that it is inaccessible to the majority of its people (393, 402), whilst those who do become expert in it are opposed to any change in a system which has cost them so much effort to acquire. This, in turn, he suggests, has had important consequences for Chinese culture, it has favoured "the plastic and scholarly mind as against the restive and originating type, and kept the latter out of positions of influence and authority" (402). This has had an effect on China's position in the modern world:

In China it created a special reading-class, the mandarins, who were also the ruling and official class. Their necessary concentration upon words and classical forms, rather than upon ideas and realities, seems, in spite of her comparative peacefulness and the very high individual intellectual quality of her people, to have greatly hampered the social and economic development of China. (403)

As Hasan argues: "To say that there is a culture-specific semiotic style is to say that there is a congruence, a parallelism between verbal and non-verbal behaviour, both of which are informed by the same set of beliefs, values and attitudes" (Fawcett 106). Wells's conclusion is that Chinese script is "probably too elaborate in structure, too laborious in use, and too inflexible in its form to ever meet the modern need for simple, swift, exact and lucid communications" (132).8

Ernest Barclay, one of Wells's historical advisers in The Outline of History disagrees with these assertions and in a lengthy footnote (403) suggests that there are other more fundamental reasons for the "stationariness" of China's economy. Wells records and acknowledges such criticisms, but this is obviously a subject he feels strongly about because he takes his own line in the text. This may be an issue on which Wells's layman's eclectic approach to historical causality,

8 Wells returns to this subject again in Chapter 31 of The Outline of History, 397-98, 401-2. In Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind, he claims that an encyclopaedia would be a practical impossibility in Chinese (763).
together with his interest in the influence of language upon it, freed him from the preconceptions of contemporary trained historians and linguists.9 Geoffrey Sampson records that Franz Boas, founder of the American Descriptivist School,10 was trained as an anthropologist and was a purely self-taught linguist, which meant he approached Amerindian languages with few presuppositions: "This was a real problem; during the early part of Boas's career, more orthodox linguistic scholars sometimes flatly refused to believe the results he was publishing" (59). Wells's views on Chinese do not conflict with Sapir's assertion in *Language* that every language is an "essentially perfect means of expression and communication" for the culture which has produced it (1) because nowhere does he suggest that the language is in any way intrinsically inferior. What he does question, however, is whether a language shaped by (and sustaining) such a culture can adapt successfully to changing international conditions.

I do not want to make exaggerated claims for the originality of Wells's linguistic insight. His conclusions about the interrelation of language and culture are, of course, based on the work of others, not on anthropological research, and his material is drawn from printed sources and not from first-hand field work. Nonetheless, the emphases and many of the arguments advanced are his, and they reveal—particularly for their period—a remarkable freedom from what Sapir describes as the "profound illusions" of most speakers of a language as to "the logical

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9 This may be true of Wells in a number of areas of study. In 1909 William James showed his next door neighbour *First and Last Things* and asked: "Why can this Wells, without professional training, write philosophy as well as the best of them?" (Quoted by Graham Brooks, in a letter to Wells, September 5 1920, Wells Archive).

10 Sampson suggests the name "Descriptivists" for this group of linguists (founded by Franz Boas, whose *Handbook of American Languages* was published in 1911) because for them "the description of an individual language was...a necessary first step towards understanding the wider culture of a particular community" (59). The Descriptivist school, he claims, is distinguished by its belief in a potentially limitless diversity of languages, and by its relativism (chs. 3 and 4).
character of its structure. Perhaps," he suggests, "they confuse the comfort of habit with logical necessity" (48-9). Wells never did this.

c) Language and Philosophy: Realism and Nominalism

It is unlikely that Wells would have subscribed to the extreme form of what is generally termed the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis - the theory that there is no structure to the "natural" world other than that supplied by language - because he makes a distinction between what some linguists have termed "natural" and "cultural" concepts. This is the theory that there are some cognitive categories which are natural because they appear to be biologically determined and that these are revealed in the basic conceptual framework of all languages, as opposed to the notion that there can be no linguistic universals because all concepts are culturally relative.11 In his explication of Nominalism and Realism in The Outline of History, for instance, Wells warns the reader that the argument is more complex than it may at first seem because:

Names and classifications differ in their value and reality. While it is absurd to suppose that there can be much depth of class difference between men called Thomas and men called William, or that there is an ideal and quintessential Thomas or William, yet on the other hand there may be much profounder differences between a white man and a Hottentot, and still more between Homo sapiens and Homo neanderthalensis. While again the distinction between the class of pets and the class of useful animals is dependent upon very slight differences of habit and application, the

difference of a cat and dog is so profound that the microscope can trace it in a drop of blood or a single hair. (509-10)\textsuperscript{12}

The problem of classification lies at the centre of Wells's thinking about language. One of his first pieces of writing was a paper called "The Rediscovery of the Unique," published in the Fortnightly Review in 1891, which explores an idea he was to return to again and again - the idea that "All being is unique" (Philmus and Hughes 23). The argument depends upon the notion that language classifies experience by labelling concepts; Wells begins with the statement: "The original title of this paper was 'The Fallacy of the Common Noun'" (22) and goes on to argue that since "the common noun is really the verbal link of a more or less arbitrarily determined group of uniques" (22) we tend to assume identity and similarity where it does not exist, which means that the logical consequences for mathematics, the physical sciences, even morality, are enormous.

Wells explores some of these consequences in "Scepticism of the Instrument," a paper he presented to the Oxford Philosophical Society in 1903. He explains how his scientific training had preceded any encounter with logic and any systematic thinking about language, so that:

I came to an examination of logical processes and of language with the expectation that they would share the profoundly provisional character, the character of irregular limitation and adaptation that pervades the whole physical and animal being of man. And I found the thing I expected. And as a consequence, I found a sort

\textsuperscript{12} Although the wording of this passage sounds racist to modern readers (and Wells has been accused of racism, particularly in relation to the Jews) he appears to be seeking a straightforward example of difference without implying inferiority, and The Outline of History as a whole takes the view that no race is inherently superior to any other. Wells's choice of these particular terms may, in fact, relate to Darwin's comments on the subject of classification in On the Origin of the Species. Discussing the problems of classifying varieties descended from one species, Darwin writes: "If it could be proved that the Hottentot had descended from the Negro, I think he would be classed under the negro group, however much he might differ in colour and other characters from negroes" (327-28)
Wells's scepticism relates to the claims of the earlier paper; if all being is unique, then there must be a doubt about "the objective reality of classification" upon which "hard logical reasoning" depends. Thus the "unavoidable conditions of mental activity" such as word class, abstraction, number and definition are "regrettable conditions rather than essential facts. The forceps of our minds are clumsy forceps, and crush the truth a little in taking hold of it" (264).

One of the consequences of this limitation of our mental processes, Wells argues, is our tendency to assume that if there is a "name" there is a "thing" to correspond to it, a misconception which can have a serious effect on men's thinking. This is an idea Wells explores in an article he wrote for the *Daily Mail* in 1904, entitled "Is there a People?" where he claims that the term "the People" derived from a sentimental idealisation, "Rousseau fashion," of the ancient homogeneous peasant class, that the words have never had much basis in fact, and that in the industrialised and urbanised modern world they do not apply at all (*An Englishman* 248). The danger, however, is that because the term exists, people will assume that there must be a corresponding entity, and unscrupulous politicians exploit this assumption. The term has become a synonym for a collective will which does not exist but which will nonetheless be declared unchallengeable "so long as that superstitious faith in the People as inevitably right 'in the last analysis' remains":

It does not follow that because the object of your reverence is a 'dead word you will get no oracles from the shrine. If the sacred People remains impassive, inarticulate, non-existent, there are always the keepers of the shrine who will oblige. Professional politicians, venal and violent men, will take over the derelict political control... (*An Englishman* 249)

Another consequence of the "limitations of the instrument," Wells claims, is that negative terms may appear to be positive - abstractions such as the Absolute, the Infinite, and so on, derive their meaning from negation; the word "finite" refers to something man can conceive, the
word "infinite" does not, "and when the negative element is ever so little disguised, as it is in such a word as Omniscience, then the illusion of positive reality may be complete" (A Modern Utopia 270). The cultural and ethical imperatives by which men set such store are therefore created in and sustained by language, which has profound implications for the human psyche. In "Scepticism of the Instrument," Wells goes so far as to assert that moral principles are therefore a personal matter, a form of self-expression. For most of his life Wells saw language as denying man access to absolute truth - if such a truth exists. Even during the brief religious phase prompted by the shock of the First World War, when he accepted the existence of a God, he insists that such a Being cannot be pinned down in words: "Even such organisation as is implied by a creed is to be avoided, for all living faith coagulates as you phrase it" (God the Invisible King 195).

In these early papers, then, Wells's scepticism about the objective reality of classification, and his stress on the consequences of this for human thinking - consequences he was to explore for the rest of his life - seems to relate closely to Saussure's stress on the arbitrary nature of the sign - the contention that there is no natural or inevitable link between the signifier and the signified nor between sign and referent - and what this principle entails. For Saussure:

[The arbitrary nature of the sign] is the organising principle for the whole of linguistics, considered as a science of language structure. The consequences which flow from this principle are innumerable. It is true that they do not all appear at first sight equally evident. One discovers them after many circuitous deviations, and so realises the fundamental importance of the principle. (68)

For Saussurean linguistics it is language which creates meanings in a world without them. In this sense Wells's ideas about signification partially overlap with those of Saussure, but there are important differences. Wells does see the sign as arbitrary insofar as classification carves up reality in an arbitrary way, but for him that reality is not - as for Saussure - a continuum given shape and significance by language alone; for Wells it consists of a vast number of unique particulars arbitrarily grouped by language. His interest,
therefore, is not, as in Saussurean linguistics, in the ways in which signs relate to one another within the linguistic structure, but in the nature of classification itself and the ontological status of the properties which form the basis of such classifications. For these reasons, Wells found his organising principle for thinking about linguistic signification not in modern theories about the nature of the sign but in the Nominalist-Realist controversy - the philosophical debate which, since its origin in the metaphysics of Plato and Aristotle, has questioned the way in which language relates to reality.

It is clear that the issues raised by Nominalism became a fundamental constituent of Wells's thinking about language and he returns to them repeatedly in his writing. In The Outline of History Wells claims that the recent practice of decrying this aspect of scholastic philosophy as tedious and futile has been misleading. In the mediaeval period the debate was forced to assume "a severely technical form" for fear of the charge of heresy:

But it dealt with fundamentally important things, it was a long and necessary struggle to clear up and correct certain inherent defects of the human mind, and many people today blunder dangerously through their neglect of the issues the schoolmen discussed. (509)

In essence these issues were - and are - linguistic ones. The Realists held that words denoted "universals" which had as objective an existence as the "particulars" or things which exemplified them; according to Plato "Blueness," for instance, would exist in the world of ideas even if there were no blue things in the world to exemplify it. Nominalism denied objective existence to universals and, in its extreme form, held

13 Wells outlines the main features of the Nominalist-Realist debate in the first chapter of First and Last Things, first published in 1908, and returns to the idea in The Conquest of Time, published in 1942. Throughout his life he insists on the importance of the distinction, particularly when writing to philosophers - in 1935, for instance, he takes Joad to task for his "neglect of the schoolmen" in the Guide to Philosophy (Letter October 1 1935) - and it appears to have remained the cornerstone of his philosophy.
that only particulars exist — that the only common property possessed by things grouped in a class is the name we give them. This is the thesis Wells puts forward in "The Rediscovery of the Unique," as an idea of his own, and in a number of his later writings. As he argues in "Scepticism of the Instrument," it is the limitations of the "instrument," the human mind itself, which "has only a limited number of pigeon-holes for our correspondence with an unlimited universe of objective uniques" (260), which oblige it to seek resemblances and impose classifications.

Wells's explication of Nominalism and Realism varies according to the use he wishes to make of the distinction. In First and Last Things where he is interested in outlining his personal philosophy, the emphasis is primarily psychological and epistemological. The Outline of History relates the controversy to the history of ideas, particularly in relation to the influence of the Church on the growth of experimental science (510), whilst The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind concentrates on the way in which a lack of understanding of the way language classifies experience can lead to distorted thinking in relation to politics and economics, and this Wells sees as of particular danger in the modern world. The detachment from Realism — castigated in this book as "the natural tendency of every untutored mind" (68) — is, Wells claims, still far from complete and it is an intellectual error which leads to a number of misunderstandings: "in the world of international politics the Realist way of thinking holds almost undisputed sway at the present time. That intellectual error lies at the root of the greatest dangers that threaten our race" (68).

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14 See Harsens, "Substance and Universals" 349-67; Russell, 135-46, 162-84.

15 By the time he gave his address on "Scepticism of the Instrument" to the Oxford Philosophical Society in 1903, Wells had read enough philosophy to know that his assumption, fourteen years earlier, that he was the first to think of these problems had been wildly inaccurate.
Since Realism leads to an over-reliance on words as a true representation of experience, "The name, the word, which is man's implement, can easily become his master" (Work, Wealth 64-65). Wells is, admittedly, far from clear about the ways in which general concepts, which he acknowledges to be necessary, relate to particular instances. It would, however, be unfair to accuse him of uniquely muddled thinking on this point because the whole issue has been a subject of fierce dispute amongst philosophers for centuries. Bertrand Russell, for instance, in his account of Aristotle's metaphysics in History of Western Philosophy, argues that although Aristotle succeeded in discounting Plato's theory of ideas, "Aristotle's own doctrine is far from clear. It was this lack of clarity that made possible the mediaeval controversy between nominalists and realists" (175). Nonetheless, the question of universals is, Russell adds, a genuine and very important problem. Recent work by linguists reaches the same conclusion. In Language and Ideology, Kress and Hodge state firmly: "Classification is at the basis of language and thought. Without acts of classification no one could relate concepts or words to new concepts or messages, because words and concepts only exist through classification" (62). So far as Wells's thinking is concerned the question of universals and classification figures prominently; he discovered that even before he knew anything of philosophy he had been "temperamentally a Nominalist" (First and Last Things 12) and this predisposition had an effect both on his social thinking and on his work as an imaginative writer.

In The Outline of History, Wells argues that the extreme form of Nominalism was found to be untenable and "out of a revised and amended Nominalism, there grew up that systematic attempt to find the true, the most significant and fruitful, classification of things and substances which is called Scientific Research" (510). Wells's fervent advocacy of what is implicit in Nominalism, stems from his belief that historically "The practical defeat of Realism over large areas of human interest was obviously a necessary preliminary to the release of experimental science. You could not get men to look at reality until verbal Realism was abandoned" (Work, Wealth 66).
d) Language, Pragmatism and William James

Wells's belief that no assertion should be accepted as true à priori, is in part the natural scepticism of the empirical scientist. It relates also to the work of the philosopher and psychologist, William James, whose influence on Wells's thinking was profound. Geoffrey West writes that James is a thinker "whom Wells regards as an influence as important to his maturity as Huxley to his youth" (178), and West's use of the present tense suggests that this was a topic he and Wells had discussed together. Wells pays tribute to James's influence in many of his writings; in God the Invisible King, for instance, the central idea of the book is attributed to the recent work of "my friend and master, that very great American, the late William James" (203), and the sections on psychology in The Science of Life are closely related to James's work.¹⁶

William James reciprocated the feeling and was an admirer of Wells's writings. In 1905 he informed Wells that he had just read the recently published A Modern Utopia, together with Anticipations and Mankind in the Making, and felt that he had to write to express his gratitude:

You "have your faults, as who has not?" but your virtues are unparallelled and transcendent, and I believe that you will prove to have given a shove to the practical thought of the next generation that will be amongst the greatest of its influences for good. (Letters 2: 231)

One of the qualities James praises in this letter is Wells's ability to see beyond the illusions of language: "You have a tri-dimensional human

¹⁶ William James's The Principles of Psychology, was presented to Wells by his wife in November, 1898, and the marginalia and underlining in these two volumes indicate that he had read them thoroughly (Wells Archive). The book was not at that time widely available in England; in Anticipations, Wells praises the bookshops in France for the range of their stock - "there are no limits, no taboos" - and records: "I remember my amazement to discover three copies of a translation of that most wonderful book, The Text-book of Psychology [the first edition of Anticipations includes an erratum slip correcting Text-book to Principles] of Professor William James, in a shop in L'Avenue de l'Opera - three copies of a book that I have never seen anywhere in England outside my own house, - and I am an attentive student of bookshop windows!" (238).
heart, and to use your own metaphor, you don't see different levels projected on one plane" (231). The following year James wrote to a friend about his conviction that the world of thought was "on the eve of a renovation no less important than that contributed by Locke" and amongst the band of "pragmatic" or "humanistic" philosophers leading this movement, James says, "H.G. Wells ought to be counted in" (Letters 2: 257). After the publication of First and Last Things, in 1908, James wrote to Wells:

First and Last Things is a great achievement. The first two "books" should be entitled "philosophy without humbug" and used as a textbook in all the colleges of the world.... This book is worth any 100 volumes on Metaphysics and any 200 of Ethics, of the ordinary sort. (316)

In this book, Wells makes a clear statement about his personal philosophy, which accords closely with James's account of Pragmatism as a method. He adopts certain beliefs, he claims, because he feels the need for them, and "My belief in them rests upon the fact that they work for me and satisfy my desire for harmony and beauty" (40-41). Although, he concedes, these are arbitrary assumptions they are not necessarily either original or idiosyncratic - other people may well have reached similar conclusions - and they are always subject to test and revision: "each day they stand wear and tear, and each new person they satisfy, is another day and another voice toward showing they do correspond to something that is so far fact and real" (40). Thus Pragmatism as Wells

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17 In this letter to John Jay Chapman, May 18, 1906, James urges him to join the band of "pragmatical" or "humanist" philosophers and then lists as leaders of the new movement: "(John) Dewey, Schiller of Oxford, in a sense Bergson of Paris, a young Florentine named Papini and last and least worthy, W.J. H.G. Wells ought to be counted in, and if I mistake not G.K. Chesterton as well" (257). (The editor adds in a footnote: "He did mistake, as Mr Chesterton's subsequent utterances showed" Letters 257n). James recommended Wells's books to a number of friends and neighbours, praising him as a "growing man" and one likely to influence the coming generation. In one letter he thanks a friend for sending him a copy of Wells's (unspecified) book and comments: "He makes a sudden daylight break through innumerable old blankets of prejudice" (Letter to Reid, May 30 1901, Wells Archive).
sees it is "the extension of the experimental spirit to all human interests" (41), and one of the most important of these interests is language itself.

James argues in Pragmatism that both philosophers and scientists have tended to assume that providing a name for "God" or "Matter" or "Energy" solves the problem:

But if you follow the pragmatic method, you cannot look on any such word as closing your quest. You must bring out of each word its practical cash-value, set it at work within the stream of your experience. It appears less as a solution, then, than as a program for more work, and more particularly as an indication of the ways in which the existing realities may be changed. (92)

And this is the solution that Wells advocates to counter the misleading effects of what he castigates as "Realism" in language use; every term, every proposition, must be scrutinised, tested and if possible verified. Not only must nothing be accepted as true à priori, it must not be regarded as true for all time.

Wells's acceptance of Darwinian theory with its emphasis on process and change leads to his belief that man is not so much a being as a becoming,18 and it predisposes him to accept James's contention that:

The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth happens to an idea. It becomes true, is made true by events. Its verity is in fact an event, a process: the process namely of its verifying itself, its veri-fication. Its validity is the process of valid-ation. (Pragmatism 92)

This is an idea explored in Wells's fiction. Richard Trafford, the hero of Wells's 1912 novel, Marriage, goes to the remotenesses of

18 Wells claims in the opening chapter of A Modern Utopia, that the modern world requires a kinetic and not a static Utopia: "Nothing endures, nothing is precise and certain (except the mind of a pedant), perfection is the mere repudiation of that ineluctable marginal inexactitude which is the mysterious inmost quality of Being. Being indeed! - there is no being, but a universal becoming of individualities, and Plato turned his back on truth when he turned towards his museum of specific ideals. Heraclitus, that lost and misinterpreted giant, may perhaps be coming to his own...." (14-15).
Labrador in order to think out his purpose in life and to define a worthwhile target for his energies. He concludes that all aesthetic and ethical assertions have hitherto been meaningless because they have lacked an adequate means of expression: "'All the religions,' he said, 'all the philosophies, have pretended to achieve too much. We've no language as yet for religious truth or metaphysical truth; we've no basis yet broad enough and strong enough on which to build'" (514). The word "yet" suggests that such a language is attainable and should be striven towards. This does not conflict with Pragmatism, however, because for Wells, Utopia is by definition kinetic. A more precise and adequate means of expression will be precise and adequate only for a time; it too will be subject to change and will need constant revision. The problem for his age, as Trafford sees it, is that there is a mass of dead wood to be cleared away before a search for truth can begin: "Priests and philosophers have lacked humility and have taken little odd arrangements of poor battered words, metaphors, analogies, abstractions, and said: 'That's it!'" (514). Trafford decides that his mission will be to prepare the ground for a constructive criticism of life by launching an attack on misconceptions about language by "the perpetual fining of thought and the means of expression" (515):

He designed a book, which he might write if only for the definition it would give him and with no ultimate publication, which was to be called: "The Limits of Language as a Means of Expression."...It was to be a pragmatist essay, a sustained attempt to undermine the confidence of all that scholasticism and logic chopping which still lingers like the sequelæ of a disease in our University philosophy....His thought had come out to a conviction that the line to wider human understanding lies through a huge criticism and cleaning up of the existing methods of formulation, as a preliminary to the wider and freer discussion of those religious and social issues our generation still shrinks from. (521)

Wells retained this pragmatic view of the relation between language and reality throughout his life. In his penultimate novel, Babes in the Darkling Wood, the young hero, Gemini, argues with the clergyman who has posited a distinction between the spiritual and the
material. Gemini claims that this is an over-simplification, a "false, fundamental dichotomy" (52). The scientist, he argues, may be a monist or a pluralist, he is never a dualist:

Essentially he was a pragmatist. He threw terms over reality rather like a flyfisher making a cast, Sir, and found out what they hooked for him. Matter, force, rhythm, electricity and so on were terms invented by the human mind in its struggle to apprehend the world. They were all in reality "partial, tentative terms." They were bait, so to speak, to catch the unknown. (53)

Indeed, both James and Wells were very much concerned with the ways in which the language of scientific thought influences human development. In First and Last Things, Wells is anxious not to sound ungracious about science; he stresses that empirical science has added richly to the store of human knowledge during the past three hundred years and has done much to clarify men's thinking. Nevertheless, scientists' use of language can present a number of problems. One of these is discussed in Experiment in Autobiography. When a science such as physics "recedes beyond the scope of experiential thinking and of a language based on common experience" (220), ordinary language is pressed into service and the result is obfuscation:

The more brilliant investigators rocket off into mathematical pyrotechnics and return to common speech with statements that are according to the legitimate meaning of words, nonsensical. The fog seems to light up for a moment and becomes denser for these professorial fireworks. Space is finite they say! That is not space as I and my cat know it. It is something else into which they are trying to frame the vague imperfect concepts they labour to realise....Ordinary language ought not to be misused in this way. Clearly these mathematical physicists have not made the real words yet, the necessary words that they can hold by, transmit a meaning with and make the base of a fresh advance. (219-20)

19 William James makes the same point with relation to psychological terminology in Ch.7 of The Principles of Psychology, "The Methods and Snares of Psychology." First and foremost amongst the sources of error in psychology, he argues, is the dependence on common speech and the absence of a special vocabulary for subjective states.
An allied problem arises when the scientist, who is accustomed to working with technical terms which do have a precise—because stipulated or operative—definition, assumes that he can apply the same standards to ordinary language. In *First and Last Things*, Wells says that "The man trained solely in science falls easily into a superstitious attitude; he is overdone with classification. He believes in the possibility of exact knowledge everywhere. What is not exact, he declares is not knowledge. He believes in specialists and experts in all fields" (32).

Significantly, the narrator of *Tono-Bungay*, George Ponderevo, is a scientist. He announces his incapacity as a novelist at the very beginning of his narrative, and as David Lodge has pointed out in *Language of Fiction*, this should not be seen as a confession of failure on Wells's part but as a "rhetorical device to prepare the reader for the kind of novel *Tono-Bungay* is" (240). It is also, I would suggest, a pointer to the reader that George's view of things, together with his means for describing them, will of necessity be that of a scientist. He is writing, he tells us, in his Thames-side yard, against the background of "these white heats and hammerings, amidst the fine realities of steel" (6), and throughout the book George Ponderevo is searching for something unmistakably real. Commercial success, socialism, love and marriage, all prove insubstantial; it is only in science that he finds what he is seeking. "Scientific truth...is reality, the one reality I have found in this strange disorder of existence" (346). The book ends where it began, with George committed to "the fine realities of steel" as he prepares his destroyer for her first trial, and the interpretation of this concluding section is crucial to the understanding of the novel as a whole.

One of the most scathing indictments of Wells's skill as a novelist is Mark Schorer's essay, "Technique as Discovery". In his discussion of *Tono-Bungay* Schorer claims that insufficient thought has been given to technique in the novel as a whole but "the significant failure is at the end and in the way that it defeats not only the entire
social analysis of the bulk of the novel, but Wells's own ends as a thinker" (392). Schorer's reading depends on his assumption that the end of the book is not intended to be in any way ironical. This assumption has not gone unchallenged. David Lodge writes of the note of "scientific mysticism" in the closing pages and claims that Wells was well-aware of the irony of making George's final achievement a destroyer (241); Bernard Bergonzi, too, sees the destroyer's rapid progress down the river as an appropriate ending to the book because it is "a radical symbol of disengagement, a leaving behind of the whole hopeless confusion of Edwardian England" (The Turn of the Century 89). The ending certainly appears to suggest ironies, and part of this irony is that George has, through his narrative, been attempting to give shape to what he admits from the outset to be "unmanageable realities" (8) and he fails - the Quap episode, for instance, refuses to be incorporated (401), the murder of the native remains "meaningless and purposeless" (408). It is as though language is not adequate for the realities he wants to convey.

At the beginning of the book, George refers to the ways in which "we poor individuals get driven and lured and stranded among these windy, perplexing shoals and channels" of life in modern society (7). This image contrasts markedly with the incisive progress of X2 as she "bored her nose under the foam regardless of it all like a black hound going through the reeds" (487); the word "drive" is repeated four times in the last section of the novel, and this, it seems, is a situation in which George is at last in control. The London County Council steamboats - "Caxton", "Pepys", "Shakespeare" - are named after figures who have, in their day, helped give shape to experience through narrative, who have found language adequate for their purposes, but who now seem to George "wildly out of place, splashing about in all that confusion. One wanted to take them out and wipe them and put them back in some English gentleman's library" (489). The production of fine writing is inappropriate for present-day realities which are to be served to the public in the "turgid degenerate Kiplingese" (492) of the attendant journalists, whose communications are irrelevant because they have completely misunderstood the purpose of X2. George states emphatically that the destroyer is not intended for the Empire, "or indeed for the
hands of any European power" (492) but he gives no indication of what will happen to the destroyer, claiming merely that he has "long ceased to trouble much about such questions" (493). George is heading for the open sea, and, as Gillian Beer points out in *Darwin's Plots*: "The sea became for post-evolutionary novelists the necessary element against which to measure the human." Woolf and Conrad, she suggests, "seek through it to express that which is beyond the human, and so impervious to the commands of language" (232), and in these passages Wells, too, achieves this effect.

At the end of the book, then, George, in struggling to express what for him is the ultimate reality, insists on the inadequacy of words; he gives an onomatopoeic rendering of the sound of the destroyer "sirroo, sirroo - swish - sirroo" (490), the turbines "fall to talking in unfamiliar tongues" (490), and "through the confusion sounds another note" (491), but it is a note he cannot express:

> I fell into thought which was nearly formless, into doubts and dreams that have no words, and it seemed good to me to drive ahead and on and on through the windy starlight, over the long black waves. (492)

For linguistic science, meaning cannot exist apart from words - as Volosinov puts it: "Meaning can belong only to a sign; meaning outside a sign is a fiction" (28), but for the poet there are, in T.S. Eliot's words, "frontiers of consciousness beyond which words fail, though meanings still exist" ("The Music of Poetry" 55). George Ponderevo, scientist turned novelist, is caught between these two contradictory formulations. It could be argued, then, that George functions as a rhetorical device in *Tono-Bungay* not only, as Lodge suggests, because he proclaims his inadequacy as a story-teller, but also because he is a narrator who is a scientist. Thus he is impatient of the confusions and waste of modern society and also unable to come to terms with the imprecision and impermanence of ordinary language. If this is so, then the ending of the book is clearly ironical since as a pragmatist, Wells takes the provisional nature of language as starting point.

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21 In his essay on *Tono-Bungay*, David Lodge draws attention to the number of times George uses the word "something" as an indication that he cannot find the word for what he wants to express.
This reading has implications also for those critical interpretations of *Tono Bungay* which assume that George Ponderevo is a thin disguise for Wells himself. The early life at Bladesover, the education at South Kensington, the marriage problems and so on are, it is argued, clearly autobiographical, therefore George, the apostle of science, is assumed to be speaking for Wells. Setting aside the theoretical inconsistency of critical statements based so uncertainly on biographical fallacy, it could equally well be argued, even if they are accepted, that as a story-teller and as a scientist George is markedly different from his creator. He goes out of his way to stress his incapacity with words, whilst Wells, whatever his views on "style" in the *belle-lettrist* sense, was in no doubt about his capacity as a writer. Even more significant is the fact that Wells makes his hero an engineer whose research is in the physical sciences - it can be found, George tells us, "in the *Philosophical Transactions*, the *Mathematical Journal*, and less frequently in one or two other such publications" (345). Bakhtin stresses that the ultimate semantic authority in any written work must always, of course, be the author himself, nonetheless, the creation of a narrator like George Ponderevo ensures that the novel is characterized, in Bakhtin's terms, by its "double-voicedness, by the interaction within it of two voices and two accents" (*Problems* 192).

The author may, says Bakhtin:

...make use of someone else's discourse for his own purposes, by inserting a new semantic intention into a discourse which already has, and which retains, an intention of its own. Such a discourse, in keeping with its task, must be perceived as belonging to someone else. In one discourse two semantic intentions appear, two voices. (*Problems* 189)

By this argument, then, one voice in *Tono Bungay* is that of the author, whose biological training has shown him that "every species is vague, every term goes cloudy at its edges" (*A Modern Utopia* 268). The other voice belongs to a first person narrator whose scientific philosophy is far closer to the positivism of a scientist like Herbert Spencer, described by Wells in "The So-called Science of Sociology," as one who "no doubt talked of the unknown and the unknowable, but not...as an element of inexactness running through all things. He thought of the
unknown as the indefinable beyond to [sic] an immediate world that might be quite clearly and exactly known" (An Englishman 197). This interplay of voices is detectable in the ironic contradictions implicit in George Ponderevo's position; throughout the book he is searching for positives, for an ideal towards which he can strive, but ultimately he finds satisfaction and peace of mind only in negation and non-commitment. Thirty years later, in his autobiography, Wells returns to this point and argues that we may in the future be able to improve our methods of observation and analysis and achieve a more exact knowledge of the unique particulars of the external universe, but complete knowledge, he believes, will never be possible because language will never be adequate for the task; this, he maintains, is not surprising: "was it not to be expected that the whole of Being would be infinitely more subtle and intricate than any web of terms and symbols our little incidental brains could devise to express it?" (Autobiography 225-26)

e) Language and William James: Voluntarism and Reasoning

For Wells, therefore, the way in which the scientist uses language must always be balanced against the way in which language is used in ordinary everyday experience. As we have seen, in "Scepticism of the Instrument" Wells claims that one of the traditions of language which has survived from the "purely positive" language of savage man is the predisposition to believe that if there is a name there is a thing which corresponds to it - in Saussure's terms, "nomenclature". The problem arises, Wells contends, because of "a sort of stratification of human ideas" and one of the limitations of the human thought process is that it attempts to reason by bringing together ideas which exist on different levels of thinking: "we accomplish a large amount of error and confusion by reasoning terms together that do not lie in the same plane" (272).22 In his early writings in particular Wells stresses the ways in which

22 This is one of the aspects of Wells's thinking which William James particularly admired. James develops the same idea in Pragmatism: "Commonsense is better for one sphere of life, science for another, philosophic criticism for a third; but whether either be truer absolutely, Heaven only knows" (86).
scientific thinking, especially Darwinian theory, has changed men's notions of time and space. To the scientist all life-forms are part of an unceasing evolutionary process, although, from the common-sense human standpoint, they are stable and fixed, but both propositions are valid, depending on the contextual plane.

The problem for human thought, therefore, is to accept that these two perspectives are equally valid whilst realising at the same time that they have to be kept separate. As an instance of this, Wells cites the apparently unsolvable problem of free will and predestination. Looked at from the level of common experience it seems self-evident that man has the capacity to make free choices; from a more distanced perspective, however, the chain of cause and effect seems undeniable. Yet the acceptance of free will is fundamental to Wells's philosophy, it underlies his assertion of the "Artificial Factor" - the only means by which man can counter the otherwise inexorable processes of evolution. In this respect, the closing words of The Time Machine are significant. After speculating about the Time Traveller's "cheerless" and deterministic view of the future, the narrator comments: "If that is so, it remains for us to live as though it were not so" (102). This emphasis on voluntarism has consequences for Wells's thinking about language. A pragmatic view of language use presupposes choice, the freedom to test and verify terms against experience and the right to reject rigid and outmoded definitions which do not "work" in practical contexts.23

In an early version of The Time Machine which was serialised in the National Observer in 1894, Wells explores the possibility of freeing the consciousness from the determining effects of language, and the Time Traveller is referred to, appropriately, as the "Philosophical Inventor." On his return from the future, the Inventor knows that his account will be disbelieved on à priori grounds because he has

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23 This is William James's characteristic method in his philosophic papers. He examines words in a variety of contexts in order to establish how much of their meaning is still valid; e.g. the word "chance" is by this means eliminated from his discussion in his paper, "The Dilemma of Determinism" (A William James Reader 19-22).
discovered the inhabitants to the future to be small and fragile looking, and totally illiterate, whilst his hearers are scientific positivists, convinced that scientific advance will ensure that "future humanity will breed and sanitate itself into human megatheria" (Philmus and Hughes 72). This assumption is mistaken, argues the Inventor, because modern man's capacity for truly original thought and discovery is decreasing; he makes "an innumerable multitude of petty discoveries," but "the fundamental principles of thought and symbolism upon which our minds travel to these are immeasurably old. We live in the thought edifice of space, time and number that our forefathers contrived" (Philmus 76-77). If man is to create his future, he must break out of this "thought edifice" which is established and sustained by an out-moded form of language. Wells agrees with William James that human beings can - and must - constantly revise the terms of their thinking, and thus their language, in response to changing circumstances. This robust pragmatist view of language is therefore fundamentally opposed to the determinism implicit in some projections of Saussurean linguistics which have led to the creation of what Frederic Jameson, terms "a conceptual prison," an infinite regression of signifiers, from which there is no escape (The Prison-House of Language 186).

All through his work, then, Wells is interested in the ways in which the "Artificial Factor," man's acquisition and manipulation of language, shapes his nature and his thought processes, and it is clear that he regarded speech as of immeasurable importance. William Warren Wagar (62-65) and Patrick Parrinder (H.G Wells 8-10) have stressed the extent to which Wells's ideas were shaped by the influence of Huxley, in particular the emphasis in Evolution and Ethics on the part man can play in combating the evolutionary process. This not only predisposed him towards a pragmatic view of language, it also made him receptive to James's theories on reasoning. This is evident in the chapter in Experiment in Autobiography, where Wells compares his ideas on style with those of Conrad and Ford and describes what he sees as the fundamental difference between their minds and his.

From his boyhood, Wells claims, he has tended to differ from many of his friends who saw and felt and heard much more vividly and
emotionally than he did, but, he argues, although this has had its disadvantages there were compensations, "the very coldness and flatness of my perceptions gave me a readier apprehension of relationships" (619), and this, he believes, had important effects on his subsequent development:

My education at Kensington was very broad and rapid, I suggest, because I was not dealing with burning and glowing sense impressions - and when I came to a course where sense impressions were of primary importance, as they were in the course in mineralogy, I gave way to irrepressible boredom and fell down. My mind became what I call an educated mind, that is to say a mind systematically unified, because of my relative defect in brightness of response. I was easy to educate. (619-20)

He goes on to argue that "vivid writers" like Conrad, Crane and Henry James remained in this sense uneducated because their "abundant, luminous impressions" (620) were more difficult to subdue to a disciplined, synthesising view of the world. This is because most literary artists are interested only in the concrete instance, not in the ways in which the instance relates to the whole. Wells's account of his dispute with Conrad over the best way to describe the boat they were gazing at, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, is an example of this distinction. Conrad's interest in the boat is purely artistic, it has significance for him as a writer only in relation to the story in which it appears - the concrete instance. To Wells on the other hand, the boat is just a boat, part of an actual physical context; if it were to be given significance, as part of a story or thesis, that story or thesis would be seen in relation to a larger whole, the writer's overall world view or philosophy. Conrad's tendency is to particularise, Wells's is to look for wider connections. Wells does not deny that Conrad's type of mind has "superiorities in many directions" (619), but he clearly believes that his own strong inclination towards rational associations and system has built-in advantages. In World Brain, Wells again insists on the way in which this way of thinking has influenced his general approach to his work:

My particular line of country has always been generalization and
synthesis. I dislike isolated events and disconnected details. I really hate statements that jump at you suddenly out of mid-air. I like my world as coherent and consistent as possible. So far at any rate my temperament is that of the scientific man. (1)

The link with scientific thinking is significant, because Wells's argument in these passages surely owes a great deal to William James's chapter on "Reasoning" in *The Principles of Psychology*. James argues that out of the vast number of sense impressions all creatures receive, they single out and attend to the features or "characters" of any situation which relate to their own practical or instinctive interests. Because man has enormously varied instincts and wants, he attends to far more characters than any other creature. He seeks to discover in what the precise likeness or difference between two objects lies, by transferring his attention rapidly, backwards and forwards, from one to the other; this is what the scientist does when he looks for the reason or law embedded in a phenomenon. He accumulates as many instances as he can of that phenomenon and "succeeds in detaching from the collection the peculiarity he was unable to formulate in one alone" (2: 346). Indeed, argues James, it is "man's superior association by similarity" (2: 345) that determines his position in the animal kingdom and is at the same time the basis of his capacity for reasoning.

James sees language as a paradigm for this process. Animals can be taught to recognise and respond to a number of signs and it is possible therefore that they are, occasionally, consciously aware of the sign as different from the thing signified, in which case this is, says James, a "true manifestation of language" (2: 356). But with man it is very different, because "He has a deliberate intention to apply a sign to everything, the linguistic impulse is with him generalized and systematic. For things hitherto unnoticed and unfelt, he desires a sign

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24 It seems likely that Wells had read *The Principles of Psychology* before 1903, but as corroboration Philmus and Hughes point to a passage in Volume 1 in which James discusses a possibility very similar to the one Wells develops in a short story, "The New Accelerator," which was published in that year (48n).
before he has one" (2: 356). Human language exists, therefore, because, to a far greater degree than animals, human beings are able to recognise and to extract from a number of concrete instances of signification the one factor they have in common, which is that they have the same use — to function as signs, to stand for something more important than themselves. "This reflection made, the gulf is passed. Animals probably never make it, because the bond of similarity is not delicate enough" (2: 357). James gives the example of a dog which discovers that yelping at a door or begging for food produce certain responses; to the extent that it deliberately repeats these to achieve a desired result, the dog has learned to recognise particular signs. To become a sign-maker or speaker in the human sense, however, the dog would first have to dissociate the sign from the response — the "yelp" from the open door, the "beg" from the food — in order to recognise the "delicate bond of their similarity of use" (2: 357) which exists between them; only then would it be able to use this knowledge to create other signs with the aim of producing similar responses. Animals, James suggests, are unable to associate ideas by similarity because "characters, the abstraction of which depends on this sort of association, must in the brute always remain drowned, swamped in the total phenomenon which they help constitute, and never used to reason from" (360). Man's capacity for this kind of abstraction is therefore the basis of his reasoning power and it is exemplified in his capacity for language.

In the next section of the chapter, James goes on to apply this distinction to different kinds of mind and to two different kinds of genius. He begins by stating that "since nature never makes a jump, it is evident that we should find the lowest men occupying in this respect an intermediary position between the brutes and the highest man. And so we do" (360). Genius can be seen as "identical with the possession of similar association to an extreme degree" (2: 360). What is more, in every field of human endeavour, "in the arts, in literature, in practical affairs, and in science, association by similarity is the prime condition of success" (2: 360). James then goes on to distinguish between two stages in reasoned thought:

...one where similarity merely operates to call up cognate thoughts, and another farther stage, where the bond of identity
between the cognate thought is noticed; so minds of genius may be divided into two main sorts those who notice the bond and those who merely obey it. (2: 361)

In the first category, James includes abstract reasoners - men of science and philosophers, who comprise the analysts, and in the second are the poets, the critics, the artists - the men of intuition. He is adamant that "the former represents the higher stage. Men taken historically, reason by analogy long before they have learned to reason by abstract characters" (2: 363). In evolutionary terms intuitive thinking precedes the higher stage of thinking, and it persists to some extent in all of us. Whenever we make a judgement for which we are unable to advance a reason we are, James insists, "still in the savage state" (2: 365). It is true too, he acknowledges, that the analytical capacity not only derives out of the earlier stage of thinking, it develops at its expense: "There must be a penury in one's interest in the details of particular forms in order to permit the forces of the intellect to be concentrated on what is common to many forms" (2: 361). Thus, the analytic mind is likely to be less interested in the particular instance which called up the analogy: "A certain richness of the aesthetic nature may therefore, easily keep one in the intuitive stage" (2: 360), and James quotes passages from Homer to support his contention that the artist need not be judged as intellectually the inferior of "a man of drier mind, in whom the ground is not as liable to be eclipsed by the general splendour" (2: 362).

Clearly, the seeds of Wells's thinking about what he defines as educated and uneducated minds are to be found in James's analysis, and although both men emphasise that the aesthetic interest in the concrete instance should not be judged inferior to the analytic approach, both are convinced that the latter is a more advanced way of thinking. What is more, James stresses that it is very rare for both sorts of intellect, the "splendid" and the analytic, to be found in the same person (2: 362). It is easy to see, therefore, how Wells, given his respect for William James as a philosopher and psychologist, and his deeply-held belief in evolutionary progression, should have been impressed by such statements.

As I have argued, throughout his work Wells emphasises that man
not only can but must exercise control over his environment and thus over his future. For these reasons, the idea of movement forward through the exercise of human effort is central to his philosophy, and this requires the constant refinement of man's thinking, together with the means of thought - language. Patrick Parrinder suggests that Wells's belief that homo-sapiens are distinguished by having to achieve consciously the development and survival which other successful species achieve unconsciously, protects him against the pessimism of seeing men as powerless automata. At the same time, however, Parrinder argues, this belief exposes him to the possibility that the human species may at some time fail to make the necessary adaptations (Thesis). To make such adaptations, men must strive to see life coherently, to relate the individual to the general, to see the concrete instance as part of a larger whole, and, if this is to be achieved, the kind of thinking which James categorises as the higher stage of reasoning is a prerequisite.

I shall argue that this view of language and its relation to man's reasoning power, exalting the analytic above the aesthetic, plays a central role in shaping the form and the expression of Wells's work, both fiction and non-fiction, and I will look at particular features of his use of language in support of this thesis. As a preparation for this, in the next chapter examines the significance Wells ascribed to literature and the written word as one of the major ways in which man can be persuaded to transcend his circumstances and ensure his development.

25 In his last philosophical book, The Conquest of Time, which was published in 1942, Wells presents a contemporary account of man's nature and his place in the world. The fundamental premise, however, is the same as in the essays of the 1890's. "Natural man" (46) has been replaced by "this elaborate artifact, civilized man" (47), and, Wells warns, these "tremendous advances and fluctuations...can be reversed" (46).
Chapter 2
Wells's Ideas about the Social Function of Language

Wells was interested in how language signifies reality, how it shapes the speaking subject and the culture within which he or she lives, because such knowledge is an essential first step to understanding how language functions in society, as a social semiotic. Since he believes that man is "the highly plastic creature of tradition, suggestion and reasoned thought" (Philmus and Hughes 217) and that men's actions are, therefore, a consequence of the ideas which govern their understanding of the world, Wells pays considerable attention throughout his work to ways in which ideas can be communicated most effectively and as a concomitant of this, how people can be encouraged to discriminate, and to critically assess what they read.

Although this belief in ideas as the energising force of society inverts the basic premise of traditional Marxist materialism, Wells's emphasis on the social importance of language is closer to recent Marxist models of language than to Saussurean and Formalist theories. Marxist writers accept a number of Saussure's ideas about signification, but challenge his emphases. Volosinov, for instance, contends in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, that Marx and Engels' view of language as "practical consciousness" has, in the twentieth century, been devalued by two trends of thought in the philosophy of language, neither of which gives full weight to the fact that language as a subject of study is, in its essence, both semiotic and ideological in nature (46). He argues for the material nature of the sign, and his thesis is that:

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1 Although *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* was published in Russia in 1929, and played an important part in shaping the theories of the Prague Circle, it was largely ignored in the Soviet Union and was not published in English translation until 1973, since when it has attracted considerable attention in the western world and can thus be considered as "recent". There has been considerable discussion whether this book was written by Mikhail Bakhtin and published under the name of his friend, Volosinov. Clark and Holquist explore the issue at length and conclude that the two men certainly discussed the issues raised in the book and there is no way of knowing for certain the extent to which either contributed to its writing (*Mikhail Bakhtin* 146-170).
In point of fact, word is a two-sided act. It is determined equally by whose word it is and for whom it is meant. As word, it is precisely the product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener, addresser and addressee. Each and every word expresses the "one" in relation to the "other". I give myself verbal shape from another's point of view, ultimately, from the point of view of the community to which I belong. (86)

Thus, he argues, those theorists who seek to explain language in terms of the individual consciousness - the approach he labels "Individual Subjectivism" - are misguided because they undervalue the semiotic nature of language, the fact that meaning cannot exist except in the form of the sign - "experience exists even for the person undergoing it only in the material of signs" (28). Volosinov argues that any experience (as opposed to mere sensation) is expressible, or potentially expressible: "Therefore, if experience does have meaning, if it is susceptible of being understood and interpreted, then it must have its existence in the material of actual, real signs" (28). Individual Subjectivists, however, do not acknowledge that understanding itself depends upon apprehending and responding to signs and that "consciousness itself can arise and become a viable fact only in the material embodiment of signs" (11).

As I have indicated, this is the stance Wells takes in relation to the acquisition of language in Mankind in the Making, where he argues that it is vital for the developing child to acquire speech, together with an understanding of what is written and said because this is the means by which the new-born child - "at first no more than an animal" (113) - becomes human. The basis of "a mind, a will, a personality, the beginning of all that is real and spiritual in man" (113) is his entry into the world of signs: "Before the first year is out there is obedience and rebellion, choice and self-control, speech has

2 Volosinov focuses his criticism of Individualistic Subjectivism on the work of the German philosopher, Vossler, and his school. As Frederic Jameson points out in his review of Marxism and the Philosophy of Language, "some of the names have aged, and the basic books fallen into oblivion (Vossler's is perhaps, unlike that of Saussure, no longer a name to be reckoned with)..." (537).
commenced..." (113). In this book Wells stresses also the part played by language in cognition and the development of the intellect, and his argument accords with Volosinov’s claim that: "It is the word that constitutes the foundation, the skeleton of inner life" (29). In the chapter on schooling, for instance, Wells argues that the object of language education must be "to widen the range of intercourse" (Mankind 214) because thought cannot be detached from language, which is a social product - as Volosinov puts it: "The sign and its social situation are inextricably fused together. The sign cannot be separated from the social situation without relinquishing its nature as a sign" (37). Wells suggests that the widely held beliefs that education is about training the mind or teaching the pupil to think are in themselves inadequate because they discount the fact that thought is itself inseparable from language in its social aspect:

We do not progress far with our thoughts unless we throw them out into objective existence by means of words, diagrams, models, trial essays. Even if we do not talk to others we must, silently or vocally or visibly, talk to ourselves at least to get on. To acquire the means of intercourse is to think, so far as learning goes into the matter. (214n)

Here Wells is clearly anticipating the phrase "inner speech," used by Volosinov to describe thought, in which language provides: "the semiotic material of inner life - of consciousness" (14).³

Volosinov challenges also what he sees as the other major trend in the philosophy of language, one he describes as "Abstract Objectivism," exemplified most strikingly in the work of Saussure and his followers (58). This approach, he claims, fails to realise that language is by its very nature ideological and concentrates on langue, "a system of

³ Although Wells’s ideas about language and child development resemble those of Vygotsky, his use of the term "inner speech" is more in accord with Volosinov’s use of the term than Vygotsky’s. Volosinov stresses the social aspect of language and denies that consciousness (as opposed to sensation) exists except in the material of words; he defines the role of the word as "the semiotic material of inner life - of consciousness (inner speech)" (14). Vygotsky, in contrast, sees external and inner speech as differing in structure: "Inner speech is to a large extent thinking in pure meanings"(149).
normatively identical forms" (82) whilst ignoring the individual utterance, "the living, dynamic reality of language and its social functions" (parole) (82). Allied with this is the emphasis on the synchronic at the expense of the diachronic. This means, Volosinov claims, that Saussure's model has discounted - and, indeed, because it discounts the material reality of actual utterances cannot account for - the historic process of language change. Thus, in reifying the system of language, abstract objectivism leaves out of account the non-stop stream of verbal communication which transmits language from generation to generation. Volosinov rejects what he sees as the implication of the Saussurean model, that language is "handed down as a ready-made product from generation to generation":

Language cannot properly be said to be handed down - it endures, but it endures as a continuous process of becoming. Individuals do not receive a ready-made language at all, rather, they enter upon the stream of verbal communication; indeed, only in this stream does their consciousness first begin to operate. (81)

For Wells, too, language is always seen as a process; this is a term he uses again and again. In A Modern Utopia he pours scorn on attempts to map out the future in any exact way: "providing for the endless mysteries of the future a terminology and an idiom....Language is the nourishment of thought of man, that serves only as it undergoes metabolism, and becomes thought and lives, and in its living passes away" (15).

a) Language and History

Raymond Williams draws on Volosinov in Marxism and Literature, and he too stresses the organic nature of language, arguing that since the sign is "the product of this continuing speech activity between real individuals who are in some continuing social relationship" (36) it can never be detached from history:

The real communicative "products" which are usable signs are, on the contrary, living evidence of a continuing social process, into which individuals are born and within which they are shaped, but to which they then also actively contribute, in a continuing process" (37).
This is Wells’s view, first developed, as we have seen, in his scientific papers of the 1890s, where civilisation itself is declared to be the sum of the “artificial factors” of its members (Philmus and Hughes 221). In War and the Future, written after his tour of the Italian Front in 1917, he relates this idea specifically to history: “All human affairs are mental affairs; the bright ideas of today are the realities of tomorrow. The real history of mankind is the history of how ideas have arisen, how they have taken possession of men’s minds, how they have struggled, altered, proliferated, decayed” (181). The Outline of History explores the central importance of language in the shaping of the species and the development of human civilisation; the emergence of “the first true men” is a consequence of the beginnings of a sign system. In The Outline of History, Wells shows how language changes diachronically over the centuries, and makes it clear that it is only when a community acquires language that it has a means of making sense of the present by holding on to the past, and therefore a way of achieving some kind of stability and continuity in experience:

Until language had developed to some extent there could have been little thinking beyond the range of actual experience, for language is the instrument of thought as book-keeping is the instrument of business. It records and fixes and enables thought to get on to more and more complex ideas. It is the hand of the mind to hold and keep. (72)

The phrase “instrument of thought” does not imply that thought is pre-existent and merely expressed through language. The whole section on “Early Thought” makes it clear that Wells sees the process as interactive. Before man acquired language “His thought was probably very much at the level of a bright little contemporary boy of four or five. He had the same subtle unreasonableness of transition and the same limitations” (72).

Wells goes on to outline the ways in which language is transmitted and cultures are shaped. He begins by examining the possible origins of speech, then traces the gradual development of communities from earliest man to the modern state, emphasising at each stage the constitutive role language has played in the process. At first, Wells suggests, language was limited to immediate concerns, then men began to tell one another
things - "The capacity for telling things increased with their vocabulary" (74). Language made possible the emergence of traditions and taboos and "a tribal mind came into existence" (76). The emergence of narrative through story-tellers - "bards or rhapsodists" - is seen as important; "they were a consequence of and a further factor in that development of spoken language which was the chief of all the human advances made in Neolithic times" (97).

Man's capacity for thought developed out of social interaction which was itself a consequence of the need to cope with a hostile environment - as William James had propounded, function creates organ. Wells had explored the implications of this idea twenty years earlier in the scientific romances. The decadence and evolutionary regression of the Eloi in The Time Machine by the year 802,701 is evidenced in part through the inadequacy of their language to deal with anything beyond present experience at its most rudimentary level. The Time Traveller makes what progress he can with learning the language of the Eloi but finds it inadequate as a means of discovering any of the things he wants to know - even the whereabouts of his Time Machine.

Either I missed some subtle point, or their language was excessively simple - almost exclusively composed of concrete substantives and verbs. There seemed to be few, if any, abstract terms, or little use of figurative language. Their sentences were usually simple and of two words, and I failed to convey or understand any but the simplest propositions. (46)

The Time Traveller concludes that when man found ways of controlling his environment he no longer needed to employ and extend the resources of his language. Thus the decay of the intellect and the deterioration of the language are presented as two sides of the same coin. The Island of Doctor Moreau shows a vastly speeded up version of this process. The Beast Men have been "humanized" by their entry into the symbolic order, particularly through the litany of the Law. After the death of Moreau, the Sayer of the Law, Prendick's first real perception of the reversion of the beast folk is their "growing coarseness of articulation, a growing disinclination to talk" (175). The sounds they are making gradually cease to signify: "Can you imagine," asks Prendick, "language, once clear-cut and exact, softening and guttering, losing shape and
import, becoming mere lumps of sound again?" (175). Language is constitutively human.

In *The Time Machine* The Time Traveller can find no trace of written records and their absence provides further evidence of decline. Wells gives considerable attention in *The Outline of History* to the gradual emergence of writing as one of the ways in which man sought to control his environment, and he traces what he sees as its profound influence on human affairs: "It was a new instrument for the human mind, an enormous enlargement of its range of action, a new means of continuity" (130). Writing extended man's powers by enlarging his knowledge and again this was accompanied by an increase in his intellectual powers. The two great advantages of writing were that it offered greater stability than spoken language and that it overcame distance:

Men separated by hundreds of miles could now communicate their thoughts. An increasing number of human beings began to share a common written knowledge and a common sense of a past and a future. Human thinking began a larger operation in which hundreds of minds in different places and in different ages could react upon one another; it became a process constantly more continuous and sustained.... (134)

Wells is not, of course, suggesting that meanings are fixed for all time by the written word. Throughout his work he urges the continual updating and revising of terms in line with changing circumstances, and the rationale of *The Outline of History* itself is to rewrite and rethink the interpretations of the past offered by existing histories in the light of current post-war needs. Samuel Hynes suggests in *A War Imagined* that *The Outline of History* and *The Salvaging of Civilization*, together with Wells's novels of the twenties "all contain the war at their centre - the disintegrating, changing element that changed reality" (328). Certainly Wells is aware in all these books of the way in which language through narrative - and narrative is in itself a language - can create reality. The ways in which writing can seem to establish a fixed reality is, in itself, a source of misunderstanding and thus a potential danger.

Wells disagreed with the Marxist view of history as determined by
class conflict 4 and considered such notions to be anachronistic. Not surprisingly, Marxist writers pour scorn on Wells's sociological and historical writings. Leon Trotsky, writing on "The Fabian Theory of Socialism," comments that he had not heard of Wells's "great work on history" until he read Shaw's recommendation of it as surpassing Marx's achievement. In a footnote, Trotsky claims that he had not bothered to read more than two or three chapters of The Outline of History because he considered it would be a waste of time:

Imagine an absolute absence of method, of historical perspective, of understanding of the mutual dependence of the various phases of social life; in general, of any kind of scientific discipline; and then imagine the "historian" burdened with these accomplishments, with the carefree mind of a Sunday pedestrian, strolling aimlessly and awkwardly through a few thousand years of history, and then you have Wells's book, which is said to replace the Marxian school. (203n)

Whatever one's opinion of Wells's book as history, however, Trotsky's accusation that it lacks an historical perspective, or an understanding of "the mutual dependence of the various phases of social life," is demonstrably untrue — although it would, admittedly, require a reading of more than two or three chapters to establish this. The explicit aim of the book is to show the process of history as one of increasing "mutual dependence," and one of the major criticisms Wells makes of most previous histories is that they do not show how different social groups have interacted because their view of events is either constrictingly nationalistic or focused too narrowly on one specific period (Outline 1-2). Wells's own perspective is that the development of human thought is the central shaping factor in history. He stresses,

4 Wells became increasingly opposed to Marxism as time went on, and he considered the Marxist view of social class to be dangerously divisive. In the Introduction to The Outline of History he contrasts his view of history with the Marxist perspective (although he does not name it as such) which is based on the idea of class struggle. "Our internal policies and our economic and social ideas," he claims, "are profoundly vitiated at present by wrong and fantastic ideas of the origin and historical relationship of social class" (2).
for instance, that the 1914 war was the outcome not of economic or material factors but of the beliefs, attitudes and assumptions of the period — in Trotsky's terms, its ideology — and he claims that this is equally true of all historical events:

All the things that men and nations do are the outcome of instinctive motives reacting upon the ideas which talk and books and newspapers and schoolmasters and so forth have put into their heads. Physical necessities, pestilences, changes of climate, and the like outer things may deflect and distort the growth of human history, but its living root is thought. All human history is fundamentally a history of ideas. Between the man of today and the Cro Magnard the physical and mental differences are very slight; their essential difference lies in the extent and content of mental background which we have acquired in the five or six hundred generations that intervene. (709-10)

As we have seen, it is fundamental to Wells's thinking that evolution cannot in itself account for the developments in human civilisation, and that man is "still mentally morally, and physically, what he was during the later Palaeolithic period, that we are, and that the race is likely to remain, for (humanly speaking) a vast period of time at the level of the Stone Age" (Philmus and Hughes 211). What has brought about change, Wells contends, is "an evolution of suggestions and ideas" (211).

b) Language and International Communication

Human civilisation, as described in The Outline of History, is in one sense an outcome of the developments in communication which made it possible to bind multitudes of men together by a common idea. Twenty years later, in his autobiography, Wells writes that The Outline of History "planned itself naturally enough as a story of communications and increasing interdependence" leading to "the gathering co-ordination of lives" (Autobiography 718). The key to achieving the ideal of the World State, as the pattern of history depicted in the Outline makes clear, is the transmission of shared meanings. In a book written near the end of his life, The Outlook for Homo Sapiens (1942), Wells reiterates and summarises this idea:

The outline of history as a whole was and is, and must be, a
history of communication and socialisation. It is compelled to
t apprehend primary processes that the older type of history, with
its preoccupation with separate communities was equally compelled
to ignore. It begins necessarily with the origins of speech,
gesture, drawing, observances and taboos. (25-26)

Language, therefore, has an essential role to play if modern man is to
understand the nature of the world of which he is a part, and such an
understanding is a prerequisite if he is to solve his problems. As
Raymond Williams puts it, language does not merely reflect material
reality, it is part of it: "Or to put it more directly, language is the
articulation of this active and changing experience, a dynamic and
articulated social presence in the world" (39).

Two particular problems associated with communicating meanings
occupy Wells's attention, particularly in his later work, and the
solutions he suggests indicate the range of his thinking about the
social power of language. He is concerned with the part education must
play in shaping the citizens of the World State, and he is aware of the
crucial importance of international communication if such an end is to
be achieved. As he writes in 1938, with what appears fifty years later
to be a naïve optimism: "I believe profoundly in the synthetic power of
a common idiom of thought and expression. Given a free movement of
books, papers, radio beams and the like, this is a unifying force that
will triumph ultimately over every form of particularism, nationalism
and imaginative antagonism" (World Brain 116).

It is easy, of course, to make such judgements retrospectively.
In the 1930s, Wells was by no means the only person to believe that
standardisation would be an inevitable outcome of changes in
communication. In 1925, Otto Jesperson (one of the major figures in
early twentieth century linguistics) argued that the various forces
which contributed to linguistic unity had never before been as strong.
He cites many of the same factors as Wells: "greater mutual intercourse
owing to the vast development of the means of communication - railways,
tramways, motors, steamships, telephones, wireless, etc., cheap books
and newspapers in the interest of literary communism - finally the
enormous growth of many great cities which attract a population from
outside" (43-44). Like Wells, Jesperson was a Darwinist. Writing in
1980, Geoffrey Sampson states: "Jesperson maintained his belief that
natural selection makes languages steadily simpler as late as 1941. But
few scholars would maintain such views today" (26).
Wells believed that the unprecedented and rapid change of scale in human life was the most significant factor in the modern world so far as its future development was concerned (Outline ch. 35), and this change was a consequence of improvements in communication. The problem of linguistic diversity was therefore more pressing in the twentieth century than it had ever been before. As early as 1901 he is arguing, in Anticipations, that by the year 2,000 improved communications will have rendered many languages obsolete and suggesting that "aggregating world languages" will gradually take over; he speculates whether English is likely to be one of these (230) and a few years later, in A Modern Utopia, he considers it the most likely contender.

For many years Wells considered a universal language to be both a desirable and a practical possibility, and for Utopia a prerequisite. In A Modern Utopia Wells sidesteps the issue of practicability by postulating that in Utopia everyone will be able to communicate with one another and he does not worry for the purposes of this book about how such an end is to be achieved, merely stating:

We need consider no linguistic impediment to intercourse. The whole world will have a common language, that is quite elementarily Utopian, and since we are free of the trammels of convincing story-telling, we may suppose that language to be sufficiently our own to understand. Indeed should we be in Utopia at all, if we could not talk to everyone? (12)

In all Wells's Utopian fiction this is the starting point. Men Like Gods (1923) depicts a society so in advance of ours that its inhabitants do not need to make audible sounds in order to communicate with one another. As Urthred explains to the earthlings, they are able to understand him not because he is speaking English but because he is able to transmit his thoughts directly. Ages before, he explains, men had needed to speak, then in some manner no-one can understand, speech became unnecessary. But such intercourse requires a common conceptual framework; the Utopians sometimes think and communicate with one another by means of a sign-system so far beyond the limits of the earthlings' language that communication with them ceases. As Mr Barnstaple comments: "When you soar into ideas of which we haven't even a shadow in our minds, we just hear nothing at all" (55). Utopians and Earthlings
can communicate only within *shared* meanings; if there are no signifieds there can be no signifiers.

More prosaically, in his sociological writing Wells explores a number of ways of overcoming linguistic diversity. The aim of a universal language is, of course, to facilitate the sharing of thought, to help create a world community, and to this end Wells was prepared to follow up any likely proposal. He showed an interest, for instance, in experiments with artificial auxiliary languages, and there are references to Esperanto, Volapuk, Ido, *La Langue Bleue* and New Latin scattered throughout his writings. Early in his career, *Signifies*, the work of Victoria, Lady Welby, engaged Wells's attention, because at the turn of the century, Lady Welby was one of the few linguists interested in semantics, particularly the ways in which problems of linguistic meaning affected education.6 He showed an interest, too, in the possibility of simplified spelling, became a Vice President of the Simplified Spelling Society, and sanctioned the publication of a phonetic transcription of his short story, "The Star," ("Dhe Star," publishd on behaaf ov dhe Simplified Speling Sosiety bie Sur lezak Pitman & Sunz") which is almost unreadable. For a number of years he corresponded with the linguist C.K Ogden on the possibilities of Basic English, and made use of Basic to ensure the widest possible dissemination of the Declaration of Human Rights.

Because of his understanding of the nature of language as a system of signification, Wells had reservations about attempts, however well-meaning, to create a new language. Most experimental languages attempt

6 Lady Welby (1837-1912) began writing to Wells in 1897, because she had read a newspaper article he had written which disputed the idea of fixed linguistic meaning. They corresponded, intermittently, for the next thirteen years. Lady Welby's ideas about language, although now virtually forgotten, were influential in the early years of the century (she wrote an account of *Signifies* for the 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica) and in many ways ahead of her time. She recognised in Wells someone who had reached similar conclusions about language and shared her concern about the crucial importance of language in education. In 1909 she was urging him to take over and carry on her work: "You would be welcome to the results of my twenty years labour, she writes, "I ask for no copyright so long as justice is done to the subject." (Letter, October 26 1909, Wells Archive).
to "fix" language in a way which Wells considered philosophically unacceptable and knew to be unworkable. In *A Modern Utopia*, the narrator, the Owner of the Voice, addresses the botanist, who, he is sure, would demand as his ideal:

...a scientific language...without ambiguity, as precise as mathematical formulae, and with every term in relations of exact logical consistency with every other. It will be a language with all the inflexions of verbs and nouns regular and all its constructions inevitable, each word clearly distinguishable from every other word in sound as well as spelling. (13-14)

This idea of language is repudiated by the narrator because it implies that "the whole intellectual basis of mankind is established" (14), whilst a modern Utopia must rest on an opposing philosophy—that nothing is fixed, nothing is permanent, and it would be folly to seek to determine a language for the future. In Utopia, therefore, all men must speak a common language but "the language they speak will still be a living tongue, an animated system of imperfections which every individual man will infinitesimally modify" (15).

For these reasons, Wells tends to favour the choice of a natural language as an auxiliary tongue, and English is favoured on the grounds that it has already established itself around the world. In an article, "Will the Empire Live" published in *Everybody's Weekly* in 1911, Wells sees the English language as the only way of cementing such a diverse and scattered Empire; it should, he argues, be taught in every colony and province as an addition to the indigenous languages, because this is the only conceivable unity the Empire can achieve (*Englishman* 39).

Twenty-five years later, in a broadcast talk on "The English-Speaking World as I see it," Wells reiterates this view; he asserts that he holds no brief for the Empire as such, but what is important about it is "this English-speaking brotherhood of ours, which is to my mind something infinitely more real, more important and more permanent" (*World Brain* 125). The English-speaking community, which includes the United States, provides an "unprecedented instrument of thought spread about the world, a net of understanding" (125). This is the basis on which, in *Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind*, Wells lists English with French, German, Spanish and Russian, as languages which could qualify as
universal means of communication within the foreseeable future: "The possibility of one of these languages becoming so widely understood as to serve as a world *lingua franca* is not very remote" (758).

Wells seems to have seen this proposal as morally unexceptionable because it would help to bring about a world state which would transcend nationalistic considerations. To the modern reader, however, such statements are politically and ideologically suspect, primarily because Wells does not confront either the ethical or the practical consequences of such a linguistic take-over. What would be the effects on non-English speaking countries? How would problems of pronunciation be handled? In these passages, as in much of Wells's later writing, he seems prepared to ignore not only the political implications of linguistic imperialism, but also the more fundamental problems of linguistic relativity and the ways in which language relates to culture - the very issues, in fact, which he discusses in a perceptive and well-informed way in other parts of his work. Thus, although Wells had a consistent and coherent theory of language, when he considers the practical implementation of some of his ideas - language in action - he often appears inconsistent. Sometimes, as I shall show, he is prepared to advocate ideas which contradict one another when considered in linguistic terms. This, I would suggest, is the result of a tension between Wells the social reformer, whose enthusiasm for easy communication favours a language of grammatical and lexical simplification - which would inevitably be accompanied by a loss of fine distinctions - and Wells the writer whose feeling is for the diversity, richness and unpredictability of English as a living language.

In his scientific romances and Utopian fiction he circumvents the problem by finding ways of creating new universal languages which combine the intrinsic advantages given to natural languages by their historical development with the enrichments of language amalgamation brought about by extrinsic factors. In both *The World Set Free* (1924) and *The Shape of Things to Come*, English is adopted as the common language by re-emergent civilisations, and in both books the emphasis is at first on simplification. The Brissano council in *The World Set Free*, which seeks to establish world government after an atomic war, selects English because of its world-wide distribution and the simplicity of its
grammar, and then proceeds to simplify it further by eliminating all grammatical irregularities and introducing phonetic spelling. Within ten years, however, the addition of a vast number of foreign loan words, accompanied by their own phonemic patterns, has led to enrichment and greater subtlety and a virtually new language has been created.

A similar process is charted in The Shape of Things to Come. In 1932, Wells was still enthusiastic about Basic English, and in the section of the book dealing with the establishment of the world-wide Modern State in the twenty-second century, Basic becomes the starting point for a new language, where again there is an elimination of all redundancies. The narrator assures us that this new and enlarged language ("We speak a language of nearly two million words nowadays, a synthetic language, in fact, into which roots, words and idioms have been poured" 419) is vastly superior to contemporary English. Such is the conceptual range of the new language that readers of the twenty-second century find, for instance, that the English literary classic of the eighteenth or nineteenth century, although easily understood, seems as archaic as Middle English in its "occasional bareness and ineptitudes" (420). Despite the emphasis on the superiority of the new language, its "refinement and enlargement" (418), there is something chilling about the narrator's contention that "today our intellectual progress is by no means as rapid as it might be because of the endless flaws and looseness of the language nexus" (421) - in what way, we might ask, can a living language be considered "loose"? - and it is in keeping with the totalitarian emphasis of the book as a whole, that language too should be subject to tight control. In this book, the free and natural changes of a living language, extolled by Wells in A Modern Utopia, have been replaced by the machinations of the Dictionary Bureau which controls all changes by looking closely at all new words; "scrutinizes," reports the narrator, apparently without irony, "but permits desirable additions" (420).

The Shape of Things to Come is, of course, fiction, not a blueprint for the future, yet its vision of things to come, so far as language is concerned, is not far removed from the proposals for a "World Knowledge Apparatus" outlined by Wells six years later in World Brain (42). In his reading of the film Things to Come, Leon Stover
points to the dangers of totalitarianism implicit in the "organic theory of the state" which Wells had derived from Plato's Republic (14). If, as Wells suggests in A Modern Utopia, individuals are to be seen as "like blood corpuscles, like nerve cells in the body of a man," then the task of directing their activities, as is suggested by the metaphor, must logically fall to the exceptional few, the "brain cells" of the organic state (259). Thus the decisions about what constitutes "desirable additions" to the unitary language of the Modern World State in The Shape of Things to Come will be made by the people of vision who control it - the words "control" and "direct" occur frequently in this book - because, such a state "must needs be the work, first of all, of an aggressive order of religiously devoted men and women who will try out and establish and impose a new pattern of living upon our race" (432).

It is reassuring, therefore, to the reader who is sympathetic to the breadth and liberality of linguistic understanding shown in Wells's early writings on the subject, to find him returning to his earlier conception of language use in one of his last books, '42 to '44. What is more, he has lost his faith in the idea of an auxiliary language as a short-cut to human unity. In an article on "'Auxiliary Languages' and the Present Inadequacy of Human Speech and Symbols," Wells rejects Basic English, and cites a number of reasons why "It is quite conceivable that the happy and united world which may be possible ahead of us, will never have one universal speech for all" (142). This, he contends, is

7 The section on auxiliary languages in '42 to '44 is based on an article, "We may never have a World Speech" which appeared in the Sunday Dispatch September 12, 1943. A reference to Basic English by Winston Churchill had made the issue topical and the Editor of the Dispatch wrote to Wells asking permission to print the article he had written some time before (Letter, September 8 1943, Wells Archive). Ogden wrote to Wells on September 12, saying that he had just read the article with "great distress" and asking "What has Basic done to deserve such an unexpected knock?" (Letter, September 12 1943, Wells Archive). During the next few months, he and Wells exchanged letters on the subject and, despite Ogden's arguments, Wells held to his contention that insufficient weight had been given to "the necessity for a preliminary and very fundamental respelling of Basic," and this, he argues, impairs communication because it "presents words which are bound to be sounded quite differently and incomprehensibly in different parts of the world until we have a universal alphabet that evokes the same sounds everywhere" (Letter, November 11 1943, Wells Archive).
because language is always changing and will always escape any attempt to control it - "Every language man has ever used is an ever-changing torrent with nothing whatever to keep it clear and clean" (139). As always, Wells cannot resist the temptation to prophesy. There may, in fact, he suggests, be more rather than fewer spoken languages in the years to come but they will be used for different purposes - for poetry, for making love, for cementing group solidarity - whilst a "universal uninflected world pidgin speech with a vaster vocabulary of words in common than any languages have ever had hitherto" (142) will provide the lingua franca he still considers to be necessary for effective international communication.

In this article, although he disclaims extensive knowledge of contemporary work in linguistics, Wells shows a sound grasp of what in 1944 would have been up-to-date ideas about dialectal variation and phonemic patterning - he has come to realise, for instance, that differences in pronunciation amongst speakers of different languages and dialects make it unlikely that the world will ever be "de-Babelized and all the people of the world have one common speech" (138). He feels, too, that the swiftness of changes in pronunciation creates insurmountable problems: "A written language which keeps pace with the rapid fluctuations in any living speech does not exist" (138). Wells has eventually come to the conclusion, therefore, that linguistic variation has positive benefits, and he sees value in the way particular languages articulate the experience of native language speakers; he goes so far, in fact, as to question whether the best writing can ever be achieved by anyone "who is not saturated to an exclusive pitch by thinking, talking and wringing the utmost expression out of one single native tongue" (142).

Stover suggests in The Prophetic Soul that The Shape of Things to Come, together with the film Things to Come, and other writings, which are termed "his Literature of Power" (26), indicate that much of Wells's work serves "a profoundly anti-humanistic purpose" (26). In his foreword to the book, Parrinder claims that although this conclusion discounts too many aspects of Wells's thinking, Stover does, nonetheless, draw attention to the fact that Wells is one of those "great writers who simultaneously exhibited great versatility and great single-mindedness" (xiv). This is certainly true of Wells's approach to
the social function of language because he is continually attempting to reconcile the interests of the individual with what he sees as the ultimate good of the species. "I cannot separate these two aspects of human life, each commenting on the other" (259), he writes in *A Modern Utopia*, and his efforts to resolve the conflicting demands of the "great" and the "individual" (259) results at times, as I have suggested, in what appear to be mutually contradictory proposals and assertions.

In *The Dialogic Imagination*, Bakhtin sees this tension as built into discourse itself. Every utterance, he claims, is "a contradiction-ridden, tension-filled unity of two embattled tendencies in the life of a language" (272). These are the "centripetal" forces, which make for a common unitary language - "the theoretical expression of the historical processes of linguistic unification and centralization" (270) - and the "centrifugal" forces which make for diversity and linguistic stratification (273). Bakhtin stresses that when he speaks of a common unitary language he is not referring merely to the abstract linguistic minimum of shared forms necessary for mutual comprehension:

but rather language conceived as ideologically saturated, language as a world view, even as a concrete opinion, insuring a maximum of mutual understanding in all spheres of ideological life. Thus a unitary language gives expression to forces working toward concrete verbal and ideological unification and centralization, which develop in vital connection with the processes of sociopolitical and cultural centralization. (270-71)

This, I would suggest is the idea of language Wells favours whenever he is considering the interests of the world state. As Noah Lammock explains in *All Aboard for Ararat*, "One opinion and one only can be nearest the truth, and the rest are wrong and have to be rejected, definitely and lucidly, on this Ark first, and then, as we prevail, throughout the world" (78). Bakhtin points out, however, it is not a matter of choice but of emphasis: "Every speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear" (272). Thus, when he is considering language use from the point of view of the individual subject, Wells's approach is markedly different; then he relishes all the factors which make for diversity, innovation and change, and as I shall argue in the next chapter, the
tension between these two approaches to language and expression had particular consequences for his fiction.

c) Language and Education

The Outline of History poses a stark choice: "Education or catastrophe" (758) - a phrase which was to recur with increasing urgency in Wells's work as the years went by. His belief that the establishment of a world state was a race against time led to an impatience with interim solutions and an increasingly prescriptive view of education. Man must learn to adapt if he is to survive, and the task of education is to enable him to do so. Wells's ideas about education, therefore, also embody the dichotomy Bakhtin outlines; there is a conflict between the centripetal and centrifugal aspects in his thinking. Wells struggles throughout his writings on education to balance two objectives which are generally seen as incompatible. He wants education to be liberating for the individual and argues that a modern democracy can flourish only if its citizens are free-thinking, sceptical and sufficiently well-informed to make their own choices. At the same time, he believes that men will only learn to live in harmony with one another if they share a common picture of the world, and by 1944 he was arguing that "Only one philosophy and one religion, only one statement of man's relation to the universe and the community can exist in a unified world state" ('42-'44 101). As William Warren Wagar argues: "This emphasis on education broadly defined developed Wells's religious, or at least quasi-religious, concept of an emergent racial mind" (119). Since the Mind of the Race can only be defined in terms of shared ideas, a unitary language, as Bakhtin defines it, is obligatory. What is more, such an aim necessarily entails control over the content and means of education and appears to preclude choice, thus it is hard to see how it can be reconciled with the idea of education for individual liberty, which requires an emphasis on the centrifugal tendency in discourse.

It could be argued that there is no solution to these issues. Wells, however, does not seem to recognise that there is a problem. As Norman and Jeanne Mackenzie point out, both aims are present in Wells's
thinking about education from the beginning, and although he does become increasingly insistent on the importance of common ideas, he never relinquishes his concern for free thinking. At the turn of the century, for instance, he is arguing in Mankind in the Making for uniformity in content: "It is only upon a common foundation of general knowledge that the initiated citizens of an educated community will be able to communicate freely together" (215), whilst thirty five years later he is emphasising that the main aim of establishing a firm "framework of knowledge" in the school curriculum is not to pre-empt thought on the part of the learner by telling him what to think but to provide the capacity for independent choice and the ability to "read between the lines":

We have no time to waste, if our schools are not to go on delivering, year after year, fresh hordes of fundamentally ignorant, unbalanced, uncritical minds, at once suspicious and credulous, weakly gregarious, easily baffled and easily misled, into the monstrous responsibilities and dangers of this present world. Mere cannon-fodder and stuff for massacres and stampedes. (World Brain 70)

Nonetheless, it is in his earlier sociological works that Wells gives most attention to the liberating aspects of education and the part language should play in the process.

In Anticipations, Wells suggests that the New Republic requires men and women who are able not only to understand but also to discriminate and make their own judgements about what they hear and read, and for this a solid grounding in language education is a prerequisite. Formal education is seen as only a starting point which "will probably give only the keys and apparatus of thought" (313).

8 The Mackenzies point out that although none of his contemporaries seem to have noticed it, the contradiction between Wells's insistence on "one opinion and one only" and his advocacy of free speech which is a marked feature of the 1940 All Aboard for Ararat, had been part of his thinking since A Modern Utopia: "The failure to perceive it, or to take it seriously enough to cast a shadow on the generally 'progressive' image of Wells, was perhaps a comment on radical politics in the totalitarian century" (427). Shaw and the Webbs, they argue, "were other notable examples of the same paradox" (427).
Mankind in the Making gives closer attention to what these "keys" should be, and Wells discusses in detail pre-school and infant school language development. Much of what he suggests - the expansion of small children's utterances, for instance, and the role of language in concept development, the provision of a wide range of interesting and easily accessible books in the classroom - although revolutionary in relation to the practice of elementary schools in 1903, are standard and accepted tenets of approaches to language development in young children in the 1990s. Nonetheless, there are many instances, even in these early books, of Wells's passion for system and synthesis. In Mankind in the Making, for instance, we are told that, since "It is integral to the New Republican idea that the process of Schooling, which is the common atrium to all public service should be fairly uniform throughout the social body" (312), there should be a graded series of reading books "that shall serve as a basis of instruction in Standard English throughout the whole world" (144)!

As time went on, Wells became more certain that he could define the "common ideas" that should form the basis of formal schooling. By 1937, he was lecturing to the British Association for the Advancement of Science on "The Informative Content of Education," recommending a detailed programme outlining all the information about the world which he believed should be covered during the ten years of every child's schooling - what he sees as the "irreducible minimum of knowledge for the responsible human being today" (World Brain v) - broken down into exact allocations of time, week by week and day by day - a definitive National Curriculum.

Wells's obsession with coherence, planning and uniformity in education can be seen as far too prescriptive, but it derives from his desire for social justice, and his impatience with the very variable and class-based provision of education in the early years of the century, which he saw as both chaotic and wasteful (Outline 755). His belief in the artificial factor meant that Wells tended to discount genetic inheritance and lay stress on the social circumstances which contribute to individual differences. In World Brain, for instance, he writes:

My impression is that human brains are very much of a pattern, that under the same conditions they react in the same way, and that were it not for tradition, upbringing, accidents of circumstance and particularly of accidental individual obsessions,
we should find ourselves - since we face the same universe - much more in agreement than is superficially apparent. (15)

Foremost among these cultural factors, of course, is language itself. "We all speak different languages and dialects of thought," Wells adds, "and can even at times catch ourselves flatly contradicting each other in words while we are doing our utmost to express the same idea" (15).

Wells's attitudes to education were undoubtedly affected by the conditions of his own upbringing. In Experiment in Autobiography, Wells refers to his own "very jumbled education" (141), and lays stress on the unplanned happenings which ensured that for him education became a liberating experience. It seems as though his later thinking derives to a large extent from a desire to live in a world in which everyone would be given a similar opportunity to break out of a constricting environment. At the same time he believed his good fortune to have been, by definition, arbitrary. Breaking a leg at the age of seven, for instance, had given him an opportunity and a taste for reading. "Probably," he muses half a century later, "I am alive today and writing this autobiography instead of being a worn-out, dismissed and already dead shop assistant, because my leg was broken" (Autobiography 76).

Possibly, too, Wells was anxious to ascribe his success to luck rather than talent because by the 1930s he was determined to present himself as "the conscious Common Man of his time and culture" (Autobiography 418). David Lodge suggests that Wells never rid himself of feelings of guilt about his extraordinarily rapid early success. Because his early radicalism was based on his own experience and on his awareness of the injustices and waste of the English social system, Lodge argues, Wells, as he grew older, sought to dissociate himself from its workings: "To him that system was essentially irresponsible. I am

9 A number of critics have seen this constriction/liberation theme as the central idea behind Wells's fiction. In an important essay, "The Scientific Romances," V.S. Pritchett writes: "Above all in these early books, you catch Wells in his characteristic act, of breaking down mean barriers and setting you free. He has burst out himself and he wants everyone else to do the same" (123). This idea is explored also in Robert P. Weeks's "Disentanglement as a Theme in H.G. Wells's fiction" (Twentieth Century Views 25) and in Patrick Parrinder's "The Comedy of Limitation" (Views 69)
suggesting that he secretly, perhaps subconsciously, felt his own success had been contingent on that irresponsibility, and that his later career was one long, misguided effort to vindicate himself" (The Novelist at the Crossroads 219). Certainly, Wells was always eager to suggest that anyone in his position would have done as well, and his plans for education are predicated on the idea of equality of opportunity.

All of Wells's early novels touch on the importance of education - particularly language education - in one way or another. Access is all and access is controlled by accident. Ann Veronica, for instance, is forced to take enormous risks in order to make her own decisions about her course of study because she happens to have been a girl, and her father has entrenched ideas about daughters; Kipps wants to study English Literature but is obliged to settle first for freehand drawing "that being the subject taught on early closing night" (Kipps 60) and then for woodcarving classes when the dates of the classes were changed. But it is in Love and Mr Lewisham, which Wells considered to be his first real novel, that the accessibility of education becomes the central theme. This book is often seen as autobiographical, and

10 Michael Draper quotes Lodge's suggestion and adds: "Rather than admit that his own career resulted from a mixture of talent and luck, Wells set about reconstructing history and career alike until the latter could plausibly stand as a microcosm of the former" (H.G. Wells 82).

11 In his autobiography, Wells declares that his first wife, his cousin Isabel, whose social background was similar to his own, had been in contrast unlucky: "In my eagerness to find in her the mate of my imaginings, I quite overlooked the fact that while I had been reading and learning voraciously since the age of seven, she had never broken a leg and so had never been inoculated with the germ of reading. While I had gone to school precociously equipped, she had begun just the other way about as a backward girl, and she had never recovered from that disadvantage. It was a purely accidental difference to begin with, I am sure her brain was inherently as good as or better than mine, but the inalterable difference in range and content was now established" (Autobiography 286).

12 In Experiment in Autobiography Wells himself points to resemblances between his early experiences and those of his hero (171, 200, 467-78).
perhaps because of this assumption its ending has, I would suggest, often been misinterpreted. Wells tells us in the Preface to the Atlantic edition that Love and Mr Lewisham, was "consciously a work of art," although no critic had seen "any sort of beauty or technical ability in it" (7: ix), and he claims, too, that it is one of his "most carefully balanced books" (Preface 2: x). Wells's comments on his own novels are not always helpful and sometimes puzzling, but in this case the choice of adjective is both apt and illuminating. The thematic and narrative structure of the entire book is, like its title, balanced through the device of parataxis. The novel is about love and Mr Lewisham; throughout the narrative the intensity of the hero's sexual feelings is weighed against his equally passionate desire for an education and a worthwhile career, and this balance is observable in both story (the chronologically distributed events of the narrative) and discourse (the way in which those events are expressed).13

The paratactic balance can be seen, for instance, in the overall structure of the book. The first chapter shows us Mr Lewisham, alone in his room, surrounded by his books, the admonitions to endeavour he had pinned to the wall, the Schema which charts his projected programme of study and so on, whilst the end of the book shows him again alone, but now in the marital bedroom, preparing to relinquish his ambitions and, with great deliberation, tearing up the Schema. Throughout the novel, at the level of separate chapters and sections of chapters, even between paragraphs, this balance is maintained. At every stage the reader is reminded of the conflict within Lewisham, and the strength of the opposed desires, and, I would argue, parataxis governs the ending of the book, leaving the issue of whether or not Mr Lewisham has made the right

13 This distinction (which corresponds to the Russian Formalists' fabula and sjuzet) is drawn from Genette's narrative theory. His terms, histoire and récit are translated as "story" and "narrating" in Narrative Discourse, but the American structuralist, Seymour Chatman, argues that lexemes of "narrative" could lead to confusion and suggests "story" and "discourse" as alternatives (Story and Discourse 19-20). Chatman's terms have been widely adopted.
decision disturbingly open. This has not, however, been the general interpretation. John Batchelor, for instance, debates the issue, then decides that although Wells himself, in a situation similar to that of his hero, made the opposite choice, "The book's pattern indicates that this choice is right for Lewisham" (40) and, he concludes, the title of the closing chapter - "The Crowning Victory" - "is surely not ironic" (43).14

Patrick Parrinder reaches a similar conclusion because, he argues, by the end of the novel Lewisham has become "the mouthpiece for Wells's ideas and attitudes" (H.G Wells 51) and therefore we are meant to see his choice of domesticity as the right one not because he has reached "a sense of comfortable self-fulfilment" - that "is connected with the vanity of his career" - but because "Lewisham at last goes beyond himself, dedicating himself to the general evolutionary study of humanity" (H.G Wells 51). For Parrinder, then, the ending of the book is clearly didactic (H.G Wells 62), but is it as positive as this? Can we, in any case, be sure that Lewisham is expressing Wells's own beliefs? In Mankind in the Making, written a few years later, we find him suggesting that the evolutionary principle will not be well-served unless we do all in our power to "equalize the chances" for the able to reproduce themselves without such sacrifices, and he inveighs against a society where such choices as Lewisham's are forced upon people who lack adequate means:

At present it is a shameful and embittering fact that a gifted man from the poorer strata of society must too often buy his personal development at the cost of his posterity; he must either die childless and successful for the children of the stupid to reap what he has sown, or sacrifice his gift - a wretched choice and an evil thing for the world at large. (69)

14 John Batchelor makes this point (H.G Wells 42) but his reading of these discourse features reaches opposite conclusions to mine. He seems to take it for granted that the patriarchal position Lewisham has assumed at the end of the book is ample compensation for the sacrifice of all his ambitions: "Love has wrecked Lewisham's 'Schema', but Lewisham has been transformed from an idealistic adolescent unto a mature self-possessed male, the head of the household who fills the 'power-vacuum' at the centre of the novel's world" (42).
It took Wells five years to complete *Love and Mr Lewisham*, and in the manuscripts of the various drafts there are at least twelve clearly distinguishable alternative endings for the novel, with a vast number of minor revisions. The title of the last chapter changes frequently: "The Room that overlooked London," "In the House at Clapham," "The Envoy," "Settling Down," "Four Years After" appear and reappear in the drafts, and a number include an "Epilogue" (at first entitled "Colophon") which shows us Lewisham three or four years after the incidents described in the final version, sitting in the summerhouse of his home in Turnham Green. The details - nasturtiums, birdsong, and so on - create an idyllic picture. In some of the drafts he has achieved his degree - "he has taken his B.Sc - he got it with third class honours" (Wells Archive LL292) - and he is saying goodnight to his child (in one version a son, but in most a daughter). The question of the rightness of his decision occurs in some form in all these epilogues, but the emphasis varies considerably. In the earlier versions Lewisham turns back to his work with "a by no means unhappy sigh" (LL295) but in the later ones (significantly entitled "The Glamour Fades" and "The End of the Schema") he finds among his discarded papers a yellowing fragment of the old Schema; old hopes are rekindled, the tone becomes more sombre, and he asks himself "was he a lonely and thwarted man?" (LL300).

Anthony West suggests that Wells's ambivalence and shifts in position on the subject of education versus sexual fulfilment as he was writing *Love and Mr Lewisham* reflect his own experiences over these years: "His trouble was that his rapidly increasing knowledge of the world and its ways kept forcing him to revise his original assessments of the experiences he was drawing on" (*Aspects of a Life* 223). It is significant that the later drafts of the final chapter omit the "colophon" and show Wells moving towards an increasingly cryptic and open ending.

But there is no need to draw on external evidence, nor to ask what Wells really believed about these issues at that particular time in his life - if, indeed, he really knew what he believed, which seems unlikely. I would argue that the discourse of the closing section of the book itself establishes, largely through parataxis the unresolved balance of the issues. Left alone, having just learned that he is to be a father, Lewisham ponders his position:
"Natural Selection - it follows...this way is happiness...must be. There can be no other."

He sighed. "To last a lifetime, that is. And yet - it is almost as if Life had played me a trick - promised so much - given so little!...

"No! One must not look at it that way! That will not do! That will not do.

"Career! In itself it is a career - the most important career in the world. Father! Why should I want more?

"And... Ethel! No wonder she seemed shallow...She has been shallow. No wonder she was restless. Unfulfilled...What had she to do? She was a drudge, she was a toy...

"Yes. This is life. This alone is life! For this we were made and born. All those other things - all other things - they are only a sort of play...

"Play!"

His eyes came back to the Schema. His hands shifted to the opposite corner and he hesitated. The vision of that arranged Career, that offered sequence of work and successes, distinctions and yet further distinctions, rose brightly from the symbol. Then he compressed his lips and tore the yellow sheet in half, tearing very deliberately. He doubled the halves and tore again, doubled again very carefully and neatly until the Schema was torn into numberless little pieces. With it he seemed to be tearing his past self.

"Play," he whispered after a long silence.

"It is the end of adolescence," he said; "the end of empty dreams...."

He became very still, his hands resting on the table, his eyes staring out of the blue oblong of the window. The dwindling light gathered itself together and became a star.

He found he was still holding the torn fragments. He stretched out his hand and dropped them into that new waste paper basket Ethel had bought for him.

Two pieces fell outside the basket. He stooped, picked them up and put them carefully with their fellows.

At all levels of language, I would argue, this passage re-enacts the
balance which has been established in the text as a whole. The graphology is important. The layout of the sentences on the page indicates pauses and hesitations, whilst at the same time separating and juxtaposing conflicting ideas. The layout also suggests the new starts Lewisham makes as he attempts to convince himself of the rightness of his decision: "And yet - "; "No!"; "And...Ethel!".

Punctuation, too, plays an important part in creating meaning. Wells's favourite device of aposiopesis comes into its own; uncompleted constructions indicate the way Lewisham blocks certain thoughts as he shies away from following through the consequences of his decision. These uncompleted sentences are juxtaposed with exclamatory statements which indicate the vehemence with which he is attempting to convince himself that he has made the right decision. Repetitions and emphases, too, draw attention to the varying connotations of words. The word "play", for instance, occurs three times; each time with a different meaning. On the first occurrence (15) it collocates with "toy" (12), which links Lewisham's anxieties about Ethel with the idea of a shallow, unfulfilled life, and when it is repeated as an exclamation (16) its isolation voices shock at his realization of this connection. The third repetition of "play" (25) - without emphasis - after he has torn up the Schema could, therefore, be read either as an expression of resignation or of bitterness.

The impression of balance and consequent ambivalence is created, above all, by the way in which propositions are balanced one against the other throughout the passage, as Lewisham seeks to convince himself; and by emphases and exclamations which are unconvincing because he is not convinced - "No! One must not look at it that way! That will not do! That will not do." (6-7); "Yes. This is life. This alone is life!" (13). Even the description of the care with which Lewisham tears the Schema in half, "tearing very deliberately" (21) and the emphasis on the way in which he "doubled the halves and tore again, doubled again very carefully and neatly" (21-22) and so on, calls attention through the discourse to the thematic duality of this passage. It could, in fact, be argued that this early novel exemplifies the unresolved conflict between the interest of the species and the interest of the individual which, I have argued, characterizes so much of Wells's thinking.
d) Language, Books and a World Encyclopaedia

One of Wells's most deeply held beliefs is that the written word is the source of all real learning. Although the subject of education occurs again and again in his fiction and non-fiction - Wagar argues that Wells "could make 'education' mean almost anything" (122) - there is very little in his writing about pedagogy; the emphasis is always on providing books. Although Wells claims, as we have seen, that the business of the school is "to widen the range of intercourse" (Mankind 214), he seems to discount the dynamic interchange between teacher and pupil. Even university lectures are rejected as an anachronism left over from the Middle Ages, when a shortage of books meant that students were unable to read for themselves:

The Professor stands between his students and books; he says in his lectures and in his own way what had far better be left for other men's books to tell; he teaches his beliefs without a court of appeal. Students are kept writing up their notes of his not very brilliant impromptus, and familiarising themselves with his mental constitution instead of the subject of study. They get no training in the use of books as sources of knowledge and ideas, albeit such a training is one of the most necessary of all acquisitions for an efficient citizen.... (317-18)15

"Indeed," writes Wells, "whatever you want thought or believed, I would say give books!" (Mankind 355).

But this emphasis presupposes a reading public sufficiently well-educated to read critically, and Wells felt that language education at the turn of the century was inadequate for all classes of the community, and particularly so for the working classes. He details the unsuitable emphasis on the more arcane aspects of grammar and the mechanical drill which characterised the language work of so many elementary school children, and in Mankind in the Making he complains: "A writer who aims

15 Wells seldom has a good word to say for universities: see Mankind in the Making ch.9, The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind ch.15, World Brain 44-45, 50-51. There are disparaging references to university education in the fiction as well, particularly in Joan and Peter.
to be widely read today must perpetually halt, must perpetually hesitate at the words that arise in his mind" and "he must ransack his memory for a commonplace periphrase and ingenious rearrangement of the familiar" (131).

This has been a frequent complaint of writers throughout the centuries, but in 1903 it had acquired a new significance. Technological advances had made possible the provision of cheap newspapers, books and periodicals, and this, together with a rapidly expanding reading public after the 1870 Education Act\(^1\) offered new opportunities to the writer (Altick, chs. 13, 15, 16). Wells was in no doubt about the advantages these changes offered to a young man from his social background. As he recalls in his autobiography, "The last decade of the nineteenth century was an extraordinarily favourable time for new writers and my individual good luck was set in the luck of a whole generation of aspirants. Quite a lot of us from nowhere were 'getting on'" (506).

Wells believed, however, that these opportunities were being abused by unscrupulous commercial organizations, which exploited the situation and flooded the market with cheap periodicals and romances. These publications, in Wells's view, presented a debased and distorted view of life. A number of his book reviews of the 1890s are concerned with this problem, and his comments have been cited as evidence that Wells was, at this early stage at least, concerned about aesthetic standards (Ray 112-118). Certainly the emphasis in these reviews is on the maintenance of literary standards, but it could be argued that Wells's real concern is sociological and political rather than

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\(^1\) Raymond Williams in "The Growth of the Reading Public" argues that this is a fallacy. The expansion of literacy during the nineteenth century was, he claims, a gradual process, and the 1870 Education Act did not have the dramatic effect generally ascribed to it (The Long Revolution 177-94). Keating argues, in The Haunted Study, that the view Wells and his contemporaries shared of the debasement of standards after the 1870 Act was a myth, because there had never been a wide popular readership for "good" literature: "the stability of mainstream Victorian fiction did not rest on genuine popularity. The overwhelming majority of readers did not care about, or know of, the major writers of the day whose limited popularity was maintained by a tightly controlled business network and relatively few readers" (404).
aesthetic, because his argument is that bad writing and the form of the popular romance give a false picture of the world. Not only are these narratives aesthetically unacceptable, he contends, they are positively immoral because they present individual happiness as a supreme good, and this is a perspective which flies in the face of the accepted findings of biological science: "To isolate one's interest from the species is finally to make life mean and death horrible" (Parrinder and Philmus 127). In these 1890s reviews, therefore, Wells puts great stress on the responsibility of the writer and the critic to the "Board School Scholar" because "The influx of these millions of readers, who are so ignorant of life that they are contemptuous of its probabilities, and who display the same impartial indifference to the laws of language as to those of Art, has degraded not only creative writing, but also criticism" (75). Men and women who are unaware of the possibilities of language would, he implies, be ill-equipped for full participation in the life of the state.

Throughout his career, then, Wells sees literature as having a responsibility for presenting the world of contemporary social reality in as undistorted a manner as possible. In The Dream, which is set two thousand years in the future, the narrator, Sarnac, has a dream in which he takes on the identity of Harry Mortimer Smith, a young man living in London during the last years of the nineteenth century. Harry's first job is in a large publishing house, and Sarnac describes to his astonished contemporaries what the world was like:

It had produced a vast multitude of people just able to read, credulous and uncritical and pitifully curious to learn about life and things, pitifully wanting to see and know. As a whole the community did nothing to satisfy the vague aspirations of those half-awakened swarms; it was left to "private enterprise" to find what profits it could in their dim desires. A number of great publishing businesses arose to trade upon the new reading public that this "elementary" education, as we called it, had accumulated. (198)

Wells stresses in The Outline of History that literacy and access for all classes to what Matthew Arnold calls "the best that had been known
and said in the world" 17 was essential to the health of a culture and should not be restricted to a cultivated minority (285). Thus, from his earliest sociological writing, he sets out schemes for making good books available in cheap editions, and in a striking image declares: "No nation can live under modern conditions unless its population is mentally aerated with books" (Mankind 350).

The idea of reading matter as nourishment is, in fact, a metaphor Wells uses often - "Literature, the drama, art; that is the sort of food upon which the young imagination grows stout and tall" (Mankind 311) - and it indicates the extent to which reading is for him a biological necessity. For the developing infant, he declares, the ingestion of language, in all its manifestations is "more than any physical need" (Mankind 122). The quality of the input is thus very important. Dowd, Richard Trafford's working-class technical assistant in Marriage, develops a passion for knowledge, but:

- He had gone to classes, read with a sort of fury, feeding his mind on the cheap and adulterated instruction of grant-earning crammers and on stale, meretricious and ill-chosen books; his mental food indeed was the exact parallel of the rough, abundant, cheap and nasty groceries and meat that gave the East-Ender his spots and dyspeptic complexion, the cheap text-books were like canned meat and dangerous with intellectual ptomaines, the rascally encyclopaedias like weak and whitened bread, and Dowd's mental complexion, too, was leaden and stuffy. (37)

These, then, are the premises on which Wells's own educational books are based. He argues that no education can be complete unless it "places" the individual in the world; without that, "he is incapable of understanding his relationship to and his role in the scheme of things. He is, whatever else he may have learnt, an ignorant person" (Salvaging

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17 In the preface to Literature and Dogma, Matthew Arnold refers to Culture as "the acquainting ourselves with the best that has been known and said in the world, and thus with the history of the human spirit" (xiii). Several critics have pointed to Arnoldian elements in Wells's thinking, see T.S Eliot, The Sacred Wood xiii-xiv; Parrinder and Philmus 12, 17, 52; John Reed 86.
Wells's trilogy is designed to remedy this situation, to "place" the reader in relation to history, social institutions and the world of science. The Outline of History, which first appeared in part form in 1919, sought to present a universal view of history, starting from the beginnings of the planet, which would give the reader "a sense of history as the common adventure of all mankind" (Outline 2). The Science of Life (1930) takes a similarly comprehensive view of man's biological nature and to this end, Wells claims, he and his collaborators set down "as plainly and simply as we could everything an educated man - to be an educated man - ought to know about biological science" (Autobiography 351). The third book, The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind, presented Wells with greater problems, partly because its subject-matter proved more difficult to define. Again, Wells sets himself an enormous task; as he writes in the opening chapter, in any attempt to give a universal account of man's social institutions "all human achievement falls into our prospectus" (22). These three books were, Wells later insisted, full of faults, mere experiments, "presumptuous and preposterous" (World Brain 2), but, he argues, someone had to make a start. Together they provide the framework on which, as Wells sees it, man's "social being must be rebuilt" if he is "to take his place in a collective world fellowship" (Fate of Homo Sapiens 79), and in Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind, having emphasised that an efficient education in language is a necessary first step (719), he lists the topics dealt with in these books, History, Biology and Economic Geography, as "the three pillars of modern ideology, the three branches of knowledge which constitute...New Education" (760). They reflect his growing belief that education should be targeted at the adult as much as at the child, and they also

18 In the opening chapter of The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind, Wells lists seventeen alternative titles which he had considered, and in his autobiography he claims that the book was designed as "an experiment in synthetic, descriptive economics and politics" (722). He explains that he had decided not to use the word "ecology" in the title, despite its appropriateness because the term was not at that time widely understood - which is probably just as well because forty years later "ecology" has come to mean something very different from Wells's conception.
prefigure his obsession with the idea of a World Encyclopædia as a fundamental resource of education.

The seeds of this idea are apparent as early as 1903. In the chapter "Thought in the Modern State" in Mankind in the Making, Wells sets out the thesis which underlies so much of subsequent thinking; wars, disaster, bloodshed, waste would be avoidable if only men understood one another. The key to this understanding, he claims, is books which would link up "the now almost isolated mental worlds of science, art, and political and social activity in a system of intercommunication and sympathy" (388). The Outline of History traces the ways in which Christianity and Islam have shaped modern civilisation. Both had "relied on the power of the word to link great multitudes of men together in common enterprises" (495). For the western world, Wells argues, the Bible in particular has been a source of shared meanings and has shaped European and American thought, and in The Salvaging of Civilization he explores this idea in relation to the creation of a new Sacred Book which will relate more effectively to the modern world. The Bible of Civilization, it is claimed, will be "a common book of history, science and wisdom, which should form the basis and framework for the thoughts and imaginations of every citizen of the world" (106). Again the dichotomy between the emphasis on making a wide range of books freely available to independent-minded, critically-aware readers, and the longing for the book, which will ensure that everyone receives the same knowledge about the world. It is hard, in any case, to see how Wells could have believed that such an extraordinarily grandiose scheme could ever be fulfilled, but the vigour with which he promoted it is a concomitant of his conviction that ideas are the energizing force, and the only way to avert imminent catastrophe was for all men to share "the same vision of reality" (Autobiography 721).

In The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind he acknowledges his own debt to the Encyclopædia Britannica but criticises its compilers on the grounds that they have abandoned the objective of complete synthesis. "It is," he concludes, "multitudinous, defective and discursive in just this present phase of the world's history when the need for directive general concepts, gripped firmly and held steadfastly, is the supreme need of our race" (768). During the 1930s,
therefore, Wells gave lecture tours in America and Australia to promote the idea of a World Encyclopaedia which would be truly comprehensive and directive, and some of these papers are collected together in *World Brain*. In this book the idea of an encyclopaedia as a row of volumes, constantly revised and up-dated, has been transformed into a vision of a centralised store of information which would provide "a sort of clearing house for the mind" (49).19

The universal organisation and clarification of knowledge which he believed such an encyclopaedia could provide became for Wells a burning issue during the last decade of his life. He does not, of course, equate the idea of a World Brain with indoctrination; quite the reverse. It is designed to free the individual by giving him or her the chance to obtain knowledge for him/herself. Nonetheless, even if one concedes the desirability of world-wide consensus about what knowledge is worthwhile, there is still the possibility that this powerful machinery could fall into the wrong hands. In *World Brain* there is, in fact, very little direct discussion of who should be in over-all control of the encyclopaedia, nor of who should decide on its contents; specialists and experts will supply material, but they are explicitly discounted as an "authoritative elite" ill-equipped for collective action. (*World Brain* 9-10).20 It is as though knowledge itself is in control, because, Wells

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19 Wells's discussion of "The Brain Organization of the Modern World" as a form of network (*World Brain*) not only anticipates such later developments as computer data banks and their accessing systems, it also raises the ethical issues relating to individual freedom which are currently a matter of debate.

20 The compilers of the Encyclopaedia would have to be specialists, and Wells does not like specialists. See "An Age of Specialisation," written for the *Daily Mail* in 1904, in which he argues that the idea of specialisation is a mischievous notion in a modern world which requires fewer specialists than any previous age. It has its origins, he claims, in a confusion between specialisation and the division of labour (*An Englishman* 240-44).
stresses, "It is science and not men of science that we want to
enlighten and animate our politics and rule the world" (11). Despite
the vagueness of this notion, Wells clearly believes that this would be
possible, and also that a genuinely comprehensive synthesis of knowledge
is bound to be acceptable because it cannot be other than forward-
looking.

In The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind where the plan for a
new encyclopaedia is first developed in some detail, he compares
Diderot's comprehensive and enlightened Encyclopédie, which sought to
"organize the new and growing knowledge of the age into an effective
instrument for social, political and religious reconstruction" with the
first edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica in which, he claims, "the
ideology was conservative and patriotic" (766) and states categorically
that: "It is against nature that a comprehensive survey of reality
should be reactionary" (766). This statement is left unsupported and
unargued, although it is repeated a few paragraphs later, and Wells
appears to regard it as self-evident proposition. It could perhaps be
argued that if any discourse were able to give a complete and
unequivocal account of reality, such an account would be liberal in the
sense of liberating because morally and epistemologically
unchallengeable - it would by definition be true. This seems to be the
assumption which underlies Wells's dismissal of fears about bias and
distortion in the World Encyclopædia. In World Brain he claims that such
fears are groundless because "A World Encyclopaedia will have by its
very nature to be what is called liberal" (55).

As we have seen, from the turn of the century onwards Wells's
thinking about language in education relates to the idea of change.
Such an emphasis is essential, he argues, because the learner must be
prepared for living in a constantly changing world (Mankind 392-93), and
in the 'thirties he is propounding the same idea:

Our world is now launched upon a perpetual investigation and
innovation, and its ideal of education is no longer the
establishment of a static ideology, but the creation of a
receptive and co-operative alertness. For that no fixed
inalterable teaching will suffice. (Work, Wealth and Happiness of
Mankind 732)
What is puzzling, however, is that Wells does not appear to see the achievement of this ideal as in any way incompatible with the notion of one centralized body of knowledge. He does, admittedly, stress that the revision and up-dating of the contents of the encyclopædia would be a non-stop process, but he does not explain what knowledge would be judged sufficiently definitive at any one time for inclusion in the encyclopædia because he does not discuss the criteria for making such judgements. He is convinced that there is far more "exact knowledge" and "realities that are known" (World Brain 42) than is generally acknowledged; the problem as he sees it is less with the selection than with the synthesising and disseminating of knowledge.

Wells's apparent naivety about the dangers posed in his notion of a world encyclopædia and his lack of concern about the problems implicit in its discourse are all the more baffling when considered in relation his theory of language and his awareness that language is power, and can be used to distort and deceive. At the same period as he was expounding his ideas about the World Brain, he was warning the reader that the possession of language is not an unmixed blessing. In an article written in 1931, Wells points out that although man's progress has come about through his ability to use symbols, particularly words, "every step in his mental ascent has involved entanglement with these symbols and words he was using; they were at once helpful and very dangerous and misleading" (What are we to do with our Lives? 15). At about this period, Edward Sapir published his influential article, "Language" which explores this duality from the standpoint of anthropology. Sapir argues that since the forms of language predetermine for us the way we perceive the world, "Language is at one and the same time helping and retarding us in our exploration of experience, and the details of these processes of help and hindrance are deposited in the subtler meanings of the culture" (8).

Because language is constitutive of human consciousness and therefore ultimately of society and civilisation itself, it can be either be liberating and creative or it can constrict and distort - the centripetal forces of language by their very nature, as Bakhtin points out, work towards "the victory of one reigning language (dialect) over others, the supplanting of languages, their enslavement, the process of
illuminating them with the True Word..." (Dialogic 271).21 Wells had, in fact, explored this very idea ten years earlier in The Outline of History. In the section on "Early Thought" where he describes the beginnings of language he at first concentrates on the expansion of human thought processes which accompanied it, then adds:

Neolithic man was coming under prescription; he could be trained from his youth and told to do things and not to do things; he was not so free to form independent ideas of his own about things. He had thoughts given to him; he was under a new power of suggestion. And to have more words and attend to more words is not simply to increase mental power; words themselves are powerful things and dangerous things (76).

Thus, in acquiring speech, Neolithic man had immeasurably increased his power for acting on the world, but he had at the same time given the world power over him: "he had woven a net to bind his race together, but it was also a net about his feet" (76).

Although in his 1930s writing Wells disregards this problem in relation to a world encyclopaedia - which, of course, is primarily concerned with the interests of the species as a whole - as an imaginative writer he explores the social consequences of linguistic duality throughout his career, and here he is interested in the way discourse affects the individual. Tono-Bungay, for instance, presents a world in which a vast and credulous reading public can be duped and ensnared by the language of advertising. In a modern consumer-based society, words are a means of social control and therefore a source of power, and it is his sudden realisation of this which persuades George Ponderevo to join his uncle in the production of Tono-Bungay, despite his initial reluctance to involve himself in what he sees as a ludicrous

21 Bakhtin's biographers point out that he was developing his ideas on the centripetal/centrifugal distinction whilst living in exile in Kazakhstan in the Soviet Union in 1934: "Such terms as 'unified language,' 'canonization of the ideological system,' and 'correct language' could not in 1934 have been innocently or randomly chosen" because very soon after this date, "all writers were required to follow the one literary 'method' of 'socialist realism,' a newly coined term for the stipulation that all literature be 'party-minded'" (Mikhail Bakhtin 270).
The scene in which this change of mind takes place illustrates Wells's awareness of language as a social semiotic. Walking along the Embankment, George is at first struck by the dignity of the buildings, then his eye is caught by the advertisements on the south side of the river: "of 'Sorber's Food,' of 'Cracknell's Ferric Wine,' very bright and properous signs, illuminated at night, and I realized how astonishingly they looked at home there, how evidently part they were in the whole thing" (169). An advertisement for Tono-Bungay "shouts" at him from a hoarding near Adelphi Terrace, "it cried out again" in Kensington High Street, and six or seven more times it "burst into a perfect clamour" (169) as he nears his lodgings.

The imagery here is, of course, drawing attention to the inescapable impact of advertising; it relates also to George's growing awareness that although his uncle's plan is silly and wild, it is nonetheless "silly and wild after the fashion of the universe" (168). Wells's emphasis is on the way in which the hoardings themselves are related to their contexts, and recent work on the language and ideology of advertising indicates that the effect of an advertisement does not depend solely on a simple text-context dichotomy. The various contexts of advertisements are in themselves texts, which carry their own meanings - large hoardings erected in public places, for instance, are evidence of official local-government approval, the text itself has been approved by the appropriate agency and so on - and this has an effect on the spectator: "The text has an institutionalized legitimacy and authority" (Hodge and Kress 9).

Although the sceptical George never ceases to be amazed that people can be persuaded to buy "slightly injurious rubbish" (194) in such large quantities, Edward Ponderevo is carried along and persuaded by the force of his own rhetoric, and his advertising campaign sweeps the public along with him. Whilst Uncle Edward believes that he is giving his customers "faith" (165), George's friend, the artist Ewart, knows that what they are being given is words divorced from their function in social reality. "You are artists," he tells them:

"You and I, sir, can talk, if you will permit me as one artist to another. It's advertisement has - done it. Advertisement has revolutionized trade and industry; it is going to revolutionize
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the world. The old merchant used to tote about commodities; the new one creates values. Doesn't need to tote. He takes something that isn't worth anything and he makes it worth something. He takes mustard that is just like anybody else's mustard, and he goes about saying, shouting, singing, chalking on walls, writing inside people's books, putting it everywhere, 'Smith's Mustard is the Best.' And behold it is the best!"

"True," said my uncle, chubbily and with a dreamy sense of mysticism; "true!" (194)

The biblical undertones in this passage are unmistakable. The advertiser is the creator of a new reality.

_Tono-Bungay_ was written at the beginning of Wells's career, but in one of his last novels, written thirty years later, he is equally concerned about the power of language and the dangers and deceptions implicit in its misuse. In _The Holy Terror_, the revolution Ewart envisages has become a real one and the appropriation of language as a means of social control is more sinister. The book traces the career of Rud Whitlow, the leader of a popular political movement who progresses from demagogue to totalitarian dictator and, since it was written in 1939, the novel has obvious contemporary reference. Wells places an interesting emphasis on language at each stage of Whitlow's meteoric rise; while still at school "His extensive reading fed a natural disposition to accumulate vocabulary" (25). His English teacher curbs his excesses and shows the importance of mastering language:

"If a new word sticks out among familiar usage like an unset gem - excise it, delete it. A new word is like a wild animal you have caught. You must learn its ways and break it in before you can use it freely."

Rud took that to heart. He learnt to write a good, nervous prose. He developed a certain gift for effective phrase. (25) And the gift is turned to effective account. Rud's ideas come to him in the course of speeches and talking, phrases which seem at first "the merest poetry, just a new bright phrasing of the sympathetic element in the democratic faith" (202) become slogans, slogans become incontrovertible dogma. Again, Wells shows how language can be used to create a new reality. Not surprisingly, when he acquires power, Rud
Whitlow refuses to countenance the idea of a new world language because of "a natural indisposition to tamper with the rhetorical instrument he had mastered" (355). World revolution has been inspired and shaped - and must be sustained - by language: "It was begotten of a sentence, it was fostered in talk. In the beginning was the Word. There is no strong, silent man in the history of the world's renascence" (243). Here again the biblical overtones remind us that in his fiction at any rate Wells had no illusions about the way a "sacred book" can be misappropriated and misapplied.

Since The Holy Terror appeared during the period when Wells was promoting the idea of the World Encyclopædia, it is clear that any naivety which can be ascribed to that project is political rather than linguistic. What is more, Wells was well aware of his tendency to brush aside important issues in his eagerness for effective action. In the Introduction to The Outlook for Homo Sapiens, for instance, he claims that a very large part of his conscious life has been "a struggle for effective knowledge" which can be passed on to others, and he adds: "The peculiar strength and the peculiar weakness of my mind are one and the same quality. Put favourably mine is a very direct mind; put unfavourably it is unsubtle. I am impatient of complicating details..." (7). The paradox is that Wells's awareness that our experience of reality is mediated by language is itself often obscured by his impatience and sense of urgency. Thus in the encyclopædia project - by definition wholly dependent upon discourse - there are a vast number of difficulties which Wells scarcely considers, because he refuses to go into detail about the practical implementation of the scheme. He argues, in fact, that such specificity should be avoided because "premature crystallisation" might establish "a rigid obstructive reality, just like enough to our actual requirements to cripple every effort to replace it later by a more efficient organization" (World Brain 52). William Warren Wagar in his study of Wells's social thinking, H.G. Wells and the World State, suggests that although the project represents "the culminating point" (163) in Wells's theory of education, he avoids facing up to most of the problems implicit in it: "he never, and perhaps deliberately never, allowed the idea of a 'world brain' to become anything more than the barest imaginative notion in his
Throughout his career, Wells's sociological works are devoted to plans for abstracting, analysing and synthesising ideas, with the aim of formulating a coherent and universally applicable plan for the future, and in this respect they exemplify the higher form of reasoning described by William James in *The Principles of Psychology* which I discussed in the last chapter. In Wells's earlier work, however, the generalisations are accompanied by detailed suggestions as to how they might be put into practice in the New Republic; by the 'thirties, in contrast, he relies more on abstract statement and gives less attention to practical issues. In *World Brain* what James terms "the concrete object" (2: 348) is lost sight of almost altogether.

It is, perhaps, significant that Wells's only attempt to provide a concrete instance of the world brain in operation is in fictional form in *The Shape of Things to Come*, and here he side-steps the attendant problems by postulating that by the twenty-second century, man's reasoning powers, together, as we have seen, with his language, have been extended and improved immeasurably.

The assertion that the modern brain can cope with the new organisation of knowledge because it is "far more neatly packed and better arranged" (420), could be seen as an attempt to pre-empt any misgivings the reader might otherwise have about "the collective Brain, the Encyclopaedia, the Fundamental Knowledge system" which, through its seventeen million workers based at Barcelona, 22

It is indicative of Wells's linguistic awareness that he always anticipates questions about language change in his futurist romances. Since the account of the Modern State of the twenty-second century in *The Shape of Things to Come* purports to have been written in the new and improved language, the narrator provides a parenthetical explanation: "(I print this section exactly as Raven wrote it down. It is, the reader will remark, in very ordinary twentieth-century English. Yet plainly if it is part of a twenty-second-century textbook of general history it cannot have been written originally in our contemporary idiom. It insists upon a refinement and enlargement of language as if it had already occurred, but no such refinement is evident. It must have been translated by Raven as he dreamt it into the prose of today. If he saw that book of his at all, he saw it not with his eyes but with his mind. The actual page could have had neither our lettering, our spelling, our phrasing nor our vocabulary.)" (418). See also the explanation in *The Story of Days to Come*, which is set in the same period (14).
"accumulates, sorts, keeps in order and renders available everything that is known" (422). What is more, the narrator tells us, "This rearrangement of the association systems of the human brain which is now in progress" (422) will bring with it as yet inconceivable developments in human ability:

It will involve taking hold of issues that are at present quite outside our grasp. There was a time when early man was no more capable of drawing a sketch or threading a needle than a cow; it was only as his thumb and fingers became opposable that the powers of craftsmanship and mechanism came within his grip. Similarly, we may anticipate an enormous extension of research and a far deeper penetration into reality as language, our intellectual hand, is brought to a new level of efficiency. (422)

Again, function will have created organ.

Throughout his work, therefore, Wells is concerned with the social effects of discourse. His ideas are by no means always consistent, and his impatience with what he saw as muddle and confusion results, at times in a kind of cultural totalitarianism which is at odds with his own advocacy of free expression, and some of these contradictions in Wells's thinking about language as a social semiotic, which take a number of forms will be explored in the remaining chapters of this study. One thing that Wells was certain of was that the written word was a weapon which must be used. In an article in A Year of Prophesying, "An Outbreak of Auto-Obituary," he looks back over his year's journalistic output and at the proofs of the Atlantic Edition of his collected writings, and asks: "What does it all amount to, that mass of written matter?" His answer is positive, his work has been "a persistent refusal to believe that this is the best or even the most interesting of all possible worlds" (348), and "in the idea of revolution which does not forget the cage, but realises its impermanence, there is an enduring support for the spirit" (350).
Chapter 3
Wells, Language and Social Class

a) The Context

According to Virginia Woolf the writer's own position in the social hierarchy plays a part both in determining the range of languages to which he/she has access and in shaping his/her attitude to different varieties of language. In "The Niece of an Earl" (1932) she argues that in England "It is useless to suppose that social distinctions have vanished. Each may pretend that he knows no such restrictions, and that the compartment in which he lives allows him the run of the world. But it is an illusion" (214). She goes on to suggest that the novelist, particularly the English novelist, suffers from a peculiar disability: "His work is influenced by his birth. He is fated to know intimately, and so to describe with understanding, only those who are of his own social rank. He cannot escape from the box in which he has been bred" (216-7).

Wells would have dissented strongly from such a view insofar as it implied a permanent constriction. In 1912 he was insisting, in a paper on the contemporary novel, that the novelist must have "an absolutely free hand in his choice of topic and treatment" (An Englishman 168). A comparison of the language of these two essays on the novel indicates the very different stances of the writers. There is a striking contrast in their linguistic choices. In his paper, Wells makes extensive use of the singular and plural first person pronouns, suggesting that he and the reader share a common perspective. Virginia Woolf, on the other hand, uses the impersonal "one" for arguments she wishes to refute ("One is supposed to pass over class distinctions in silence" 214), and the second person "we" (implying consensus) for all gradations of the upper- and middle-classes ("And when we have threaded our way carefully through all these grades from the niece of the Earl to the friend of the cousin of the general, we are still faced with an abyss; a gulf yawns before us; on the other side are the working classes" 215). The third person plural is reserved for the working-class ("Such education as the act of writing implies at once makes them self-conscious, or class conscious or removes them from their own class" 218). Wells starts from the
assumption that the realist novel is a serious art form which has an important part to play in the modern world, and that it should therefore be accessible to as wide a readership as possible. Virginia Woolf takes it for granted that the novel is the property of the middle-class because it is impossible for working men "to write in their own language about their own lives" (218). This, she claims, is because the very act of writing removes them from their class:

That anonymity, in the shadow of which writers write most happily, is the prerogative of the middle class alone. It is from the middle class only that the practice of writing is as natural and habitual as hoeing a field or building a house. (218)

Whatever the merits of this argument - and Woolf is tackling directly what she declares to be a "delicate" subject - the assumption that the language variety with which the middle-class is familiar is neutral and somehow "natural" is dubious because such a variety clearly reflects the writer's own language choices. In this chapter, I shall argue that Wells's position in the social hierarchy played an important part in his choice of language for his fictional characters, both in his early career as a writer and in his later novels, when his social position was assured.

Every writer must, of course, take as his raw material the language used by his own society and this is applicable to all forms of writing. Novels like Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* or Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* which experiment with language and depart from established usages are intelligible only because the new and expanded linguistic forms defamiliarise the structures of established languages - even those which are likely to be unknown to the general reader.¹ The

¹ In his book on Joyce's language, Anthony Burgess claims that: "The fundamental strength of Joyce's language lies not in its eagerness to expand the lexis - grudgingly, despite everything, most of his readers would admit that this is healthier than a Newspeak contraction of it - but in its loving acceptance of the native idiom....Joyce never moved far - except for contrast-pointing dramatic effects - from the rhythms of his native Dublin. Both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* end up as glorifications of the linguistic resources of that town, just as the novels of Dickens exalt the resources of nineteenth century London" (Joysperrick 178).
writer inherits not only language and literary convention but also the ways in which, in his particular period, linguistic form is seen to represent external reality — and, as an extension of this, the ways in which referential illusion is created. In this respect all forms of written discourse can be seen, in Mikhail Bakhtin's terms, as "secondary speech genres," which, "During the process of their formation...absorb and digest various primary (simple) genres that have taken form in unmediated speech communion" (Speech Genres 62). We can produce and respond to literary texts because we produce and respond to language, and as the context of situation changes, the production and reception of literary texts changes also. Terry Eagleton argues, in Criticism and Ideology, that a text should be seen not as an "expression" of ideology but as "a certain production of ideology" (64). In Dickens, for instance: "The imaginary London of Bleak House exists as the product of a representational process which signifies not 'Victorian London' as such, but certain of Victorian London's ways of signifying itself" (77). Wells works within the "representational" form of the realist novel but from the beginning of his career found ways of disrupting its assumptions through irony. In his fiction, the characters are aware that they are constructs of social class — or if, like Artie Kipps and Edward Tewler, they are incapable of such insight, the narrator supplies the commentary for them.

There are, however, in any linguistic community, at any moment, a large number of language varieties available to the writer, and, indeed, it is this diversity, this "heteroglossia", which Mikhail Bakhtin claims to be the starting point for the novel itself:

The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized.

The internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behaviour, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve the specific sociopolitical purposes of the day, even of the hour (each day has its own slogan, its own vocabulary, its own
Diachronically, of course, this diversity of language forms is constantly shifting and readjusting and Marxist linguists see class-based variation as the basis of this process. Volosinov stresses the significance of what he terms "the hierarchical factor" (Marxism and the Philosophy of Language 21) and he sees language itself as an arena of class struggle. He goes so far as to suggest that this "social multiaccentuality" (23) is a necessary, indeed, a defining characteristic of a living language. Linguistic forms which have "withdrawn from the pressures of the social class struggle" lose their force and their capacity for further development and thus are of interest only to the philologist (23).

Marxist critics, therefore, stress the central importance of such factors in the production of literature, and, from a very different perspective, reach the same conclusion as Virginia Woolf — that the writer can never detach him or herself from his/her position in the social hierarchy. As Lucien Goldmann points out:

"...to try to understand cultural activity outside the totality of life in the society in which it is developed is just as futile an enterprise as trying to detach, not provisionally and for the needs of study but fundamentally and for good, a word from a sentence and a sentence from an utterance. If you agree that this is wrong, I think it also follows that statements cannot be validly studied by separating them from the individual who formulates them or by separating this individual from the socio-historical relations in which he is involved." (112)

Goldmann's "Genetic Structuralism" is based on the premise that, in Western society, the most significant socio-historical relations for any individual are those derived from his place in the class structure; therefore it is the social groupings to which the writer belongs or with which he identifies that form his ideological consciousness (114).

At the turn of the century, however, it was established middle-class attitudes such as those expressed by Virginia Woolf that the
aspiring writer had to contend with, and in his autobiography Wells acknowledges that despite his "brave trumpetings" of 1912 (Experiment in Autobiography 496) about the freedom of the writer to deal with all aspects of life in society, it had not been as simple as that. He feels in retrospect that the destruction of his first attempt at fiction, the 35,000 word Lady Frankland's Companion had been a "timely holocaust" (311) and that the choice of the scientific romance form for his first published work had been a wise one: "It was a sign of growing intelligence that I was realizing my exceptional ignorance of the contemporary world and exploring the possibilities of fantasy. That is the proper game for the young man, particularly for young men without a natural social setting of their own" (310). By the time he felt ready to write a novel, Wells had had the opportunity to learn at first hand about other strata of society, and it is significant that his first novels are centred on the problems and divisions inherent in a class-based society. The object of this chapter is to outline some of the ways in which social class factors appear to have influenced Wells's use of language in his early novels, to examine the ways in which he responded to relevant literary conventions, and to trace the ways in which his attitudes to language usage change as his career progresses.

It could be argued that class stratification is still a dominant feature of English society, but H.G Wells grew up at a time when class separations were not only more rigidly defined, they were regarded by many as part of the nature of things. A number of nineteenth century writers - Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin and Matthew Arnold in particular - had given considerable attention to the question of class in post-Industrial Revolution society, and in Wells's own period the Liberal politician, C.F.G Masterman, saw class divisiveness as the major problem of the day, and the potential strength of the working class as a source of danger to the established order: "How long before, in a fit of ill temper it suddenly realizes its tremendous unconquerable might?" (From the Abyss 8). In his examination of working class culture, Languages and Class, Stedman Jones points out that during the nineteenth century the gaps between the various strata of the middle-class and between the middle- and working-classes widened considerably. From the 1840 s, he argues, socio-economic changes resulted in "ever more insistent striving
towards gentility" (186). Social mobility, and the rapid increase in the number of "white collar workers" led to widespread anxiety about social behaviour, particularly language usage, which is reflected in the large number of books on etiquette and "correct" speech which appeared in the period.² By the end of the nineteenth century, huge disparities of wealth had led to geographical and social separations greater than at any other period in modern history.³ Masterman, wrote in 1910: "If anything is wrong in material conditions it is in the apparatus, not of accumulation but of distribution. An altogether inadequate proportion of this accumulation is the absolute possession of a tiny class which sits secure upon the summit" (The Condition of England 162).

Later Marxist writers claim that language plays a constitutive part in forming and sustaining the class system. In "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," Louis Althusser points to the power enshrined in discursive practices and relates this to Marx's maxim that the first task of any social formation which wishes to remain in power is to ensure the reproduction of the conditions of production. To this end, Althusser argues, education in a capitalist society must give as much attention to discourse as to the transmission of skills:

[It must ensure] a reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they, too, will provide for the domination of the ruling class "in words". (128-29)

In late-Victorian and Edwardian society, language played a significant role in this process, helping to smooth over or divert attention from class divisions by representing reality in a way which naturalised the

² Some of the most popular of these were: Manners and Rules of Good Society, by a Member of the Aristocracy (1888) - Wells quotes from this manual as an epigraph for Kipps; Society Small Talk, by a Member of the Aristocracy (1879); Etiquette for Women, by One of the Aristocracy (1902); Manners for Men, by "Mrs Humphrey" (1897).

³ For a range of arguments on this issue, see Paul Thompson ch.1; Barker, in Cox and Dyson eds., 51-96.
status quo. Drawing on Gramsci's concept of hegemony, Philip Dodd argues that "Englishness", a sense of national culture and identity, was reconstituted during this period as a way of incorporating and neutralising social groups which were seen as a threat to the dominant social order; this, he maintains, could not have been achieved by imposition from above: "the establishment of hegemony involves negotiation and "active consent on the part of subordinated", and this required "an overlapping vocabulary of evaluation" (2). Thus, the vocabulary of social reformers like Beatrice Webb and Charles Booth (which, for instance, described the life of the working classes as "natural" and "simple" in contrast to the "artificial" and "complicated" lives of the rich) not only helped to "fix working class concerns and competence and ratify the mental/manual distinction," (8) it also made available terms and judgements which were adopted by working class people themselves when thinking about and describing their own experience (9-10).

This is a process Wells illustrates ironically in a number of his writings. The Tramp in The Wonderful Visit, for instance, describes how he had broken away from the almost feudal village of Siddermorton because its inhabitants are "pithed" - indoctrinated with acceptably deferential attitudes - from their schooldays onwards:

"It stands to reason," said the Tramp. "If they had brains they'd think for themselves. And you can go through that village from end to end and never meet anybody doing as much. Pithed human beings they are. I know that village, I was born there, and I might be there now, a toilin' for my betters, if I hadn't struck against the 'pithin.'" (44)

4 It has been suggested that the conventional wisdom of contemporary and later historians who see Victorian/Edwardian society as divided into aristocracy, middle and working classes is in itself an example of hegemony as revealed in discourse since it does not reflect socio-economic reality. W.D. Robertson claims, in "Wealth, Elites and Class Structure in Modern Britain": "...two middle classes existed, quite distinct not merely in sources of income but in attitudes and behaviour as well". Robin Gray also disputes the existence of three classes during the period, as they are generally defined. He argues: "The prevalence of the notion is a measure of the success with which such strata were subordinated to bourgeois hegemony - to the point where real differences in class position were obscured" ("Bourgeois Hegemony in Victorian Britain" 74).
This is one of Wells's favourite metaphors for hegemonic practices. Thirty years later, in a newspaper article on education, he was claiming that "classical headmasters...will spare no efforts to pith as many young intelligences as possible with their antiquated, deadening and anti-social disciplines" (A Year of Prophesying 139). The part played by language in this process is, of course, central, and many of the lower-class characters in Wells's novels who successfully resist "pithing", such as Mr Polly or the Tramp in Bealby, possess a non-standard vocabulary of their own. Kipps demonstrates the process in action. The draper's assistants are not only constrained by lack of money, they have scarcely any free time and, since they are required to "live-in", they have no control over even the simplest aspects of their lives. We are shown Buggins, the oldest and hence most down-trodden of the draper's assistants, sitting up in bed in the Shalford Emporium dormitory, reading a newspaper:

He was very much excited by a leader on Indian affairs. "By Jove!" he said, "it won't do to give these here Blacks votes."

"No fear," said Kipps.

"They're different altogether," said Buggins. "They 'aven't the sound sense of Englishmen, and they 'aven't the character. There's a sort of tricksy dishonesty about 'em - false witness and all that - of which an Englishman has no idea. Outside their courts of law - it's a positive fact, Kipps, there's witnesses waiting to be 'ired. Reg'lar trade. Touch their 'ats as you go in. Englishmen 'ave no idea, I tell you - not ord'nary Englishmen. It's in their blood. They're too timid to be honest. Too slavish. They aren't used to being free like we are, and if you gave 'em freedom they wouldn't make a proper use of i t . Now we - Oh, Damn!"

For the gas had gone out and Buggins had the whole column of Society Club Chat still to read. (123)

And the irony is not restricted to the underprivileged. As soon as he learns of his legacy, Kipps's fantasies soar to encounters with royalty. The narrator comments acidly: "From such thoughts this free citizen of our Crowned Republic passed insensibly into dreams - turgid dreams of that vast ascent which constitutes the true-born Briton's social scheme,
which terminates with retrogressive progression and a bending back" (168).

Wells's own early experiences as a draper's assistant gave him plenty of opportunity for observing such scenes. The exact gradations of the English class system in the late Victorian/Edwardian period are complex but it seems clear that although Wells's parents were both in domestic service when they met - his father was a gardener on a large estate, his mother a lady's maid - the fact that after their marriage they owned a shop elevated their family above the level of the working class. When the shop failed, Sarah Wells returned to her former employer at Up Park as housekeeper, but this again was the highest stratum of the servant classes. Writing thirty years later about his childhood in Bromley and of the advantages of the private school to which his mother insisted he be sent, Wells comments "So far as the masses went I was entirely of my mother's thinking; I was middle-class, - 'petty bourgeois' as the Marxists have it" (Autobiography 94).

This is a class which has received particular condemnation from both right- and left-wing thinkers. From a right-wing perspective, lower-middle-class aspirations and pretensions to gentility are seen as absurd and despicable, whilst left-wing writers castigate this section of society for its lack of warmth and understanding for the proletarian cause. But these accusations - in the latter case often made by Marxist or Socialist writers of upper-middle-class origins whose observations

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5 Robert Colls links the ethos of political Liberalism with the notion of freedom: "Specific freedoms - free subjects, free speech, free ideas, free religions, free contracts, free enterprise, free markets, free trade - were the historic Liberal inducements of an ideal Englishness" (Dodd 31). Such attitudes were promulgated and reinforced not only by newspapers but also by a number of popular publications. One of the best known of these was Samuel Smiles's Self Help, originally published in 1859, which went into many editions. Smiles preached an extreme form of individualism which combined with the notion of freedom to produce a predominantly English characteristic: "One of the most strongly-marked features of the English people is their spirit of industry....It is this spirit displayed by the commons of England which has laid the foundations and built up the industrial greatness of the empire. This vigorous growth of the nation has been mainly the result of the free energy of individuals..." (32).
are tinged by a romantic view of the working class ⁶ - ignore the very real tensions experienced by the "petit bourgeois" whose hold on respectability was tenuous. Such tensions played a considerable part in shaping Wells's ideas, particularly with regard to the distinction Gissing makes in *The Nether World* between "the two great sections" of the lower orders: "those who do, and those who do not wear collars" (69). This was a significant categorisation, and P.J. Keating uses it as a reference point for distinguishing between the working class and the lower middle-class in Victorian fiction. In many of Wells's early novels the problems of maintaining the outward appearance of respectability, essential if the unemployed shop assistant or assistant school teacher is ever to get another "position," are focused on the collar. Such class-indicators are, in Saussure's terms, wholly arbitrary signifiers and Wells's characters are fully aware of this. Mr Lewisham is convinced that it is the water-proof collar, which is all he can afford, that signifies his lowly status and causes the scholastic agencies to reject him (234); Kipps is advised, when he is dismissed from Shalford's: "keep hold of your collar and cuffs - shirts if you

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⁶ George Orwell, for instance, in an essay on Charles Dickens, suggests that "The great disadvantage, and advantage, of the small urban bourgeois is his limited outlook. He sees the world as a middle-class world, and everything outside these limits is either laughable or slightly wicked. On the one hand, he has no contact with industry of the soil; on the other, no contact with the governing classes" (*Decline of the English Murder* 99). Christopher Caudwell puts a similar point more forcefully: "It is the peculiar suffering of the petit bourgeois that they are called upon to hate each other....One's hatred extends from the workers 'below', that abyss always waiting for one, to the successful petit bourgeois just above whom one envies and hates" (78-9). Marxist critics in general have condemned Wells as a muddled thinker and Christopher Caudwell puts the blame on Wells's petit bourgeois background, which, he claims, has given him a false sense of value and a lack of real feeling for the suffering proletariat. Even C.F Masterman, who is usually in sympathy with Wells's views, writes in 1905 that in *Anticipations* and *Mankind in the Making* Wells writes harshly about his fellow-man: "It is all a little cruel; too detached to be entirely pleasant: the author surveys the scrambling horde as the observer surveys the ant-heap or the locust crowd with a cold resentment and contempt. He has known something of the foulness of the struggle. He has been near to be himself suffocated in the swarm. He has escaped with no illusions concerning the loveliness of the average citizen of the Imperial race" (*In Peril of Change*, 198).
can, but collars anyhow. Spout them last" (109-110). The use of "Mr" in the titles of two Edwardian novels, Love and Mr Lewisham and The History of Mr Polly, and the narrator's frequent use of this form within the novels is significant also in this respect. As K.C. Phillipps points out in Language and Class in Victorian England, although addressing a man by his surname alone was the usual neutral form of address amongst equals in the upper classes - no doubt the rationale behind Coote's "my dear Kipps - if I may call you that" (164) - at a lower level of society the title was jealously guarded because it denoted the difference between the white collar and blue collar worker (Phillipps 144-5). It is this anomalous position of the lower-middle-class in a rigidly stratified society which influenced Wells's approach to language in a very direct way, as is evident in the speech of his characters.

It is clear from his novels that Wells had an intimate knowledge of the fine gradations which existed within the lower-middle-class and of the way in which these were reflected in and sustained by language. In The Dream, when Uncle John Julip is dismissed for stealing garden produce from the great estate to which he had been head gardener, he decides to "lower himself" by offering his services as a jobbing-gardener, but he cannot refrain from describing the suburban villa gardens as "tuppenny-apenny" and their flower-beds as "two-penn'orths of all sorts"; his clients resent these comments "But," says the narrator, "they had not the manliness to clear up this matter by a good straightforward argument in which they would have had their social position very exactly defined; they preferred to keep their illusions and just ceased to employ him" (74). Illusions are maintained by euphemisms. Shop-assistants talk of obtaining a "situation" or a "position", and the narrator's discourse adopts a similar tone; Mr Polly leaves his employment in Canterbury, for instance, in the company of "another commercial gentleman" (Mr Polly 72). Employment as a clerk may be despised by the gentry - and by John Julip, who has adopted their attitudes: "It'll set up these 'ere season-ticket clerks no end to 'ave Lord Bramble's gardener dragging a lawn-mower for them. I can see 'em showing me to their friends out of the window. Bin 'ead-gardener to a Lord, they'll say. Well, well - " (Dream 72) - but Wells indicates that
from a working-class or lower-middle-class perspective, there is nothing wrong with being a clerk, in fact it is an occupation which is sought after for its status. Mr Polly's cousin, Johnson, works as the up-line ticket clerk at Easewood Junction; he is proud of his job and in no doubt about "the responsibilities of his position" (Mr Polly 81). At the funeral, Uncle Penstemon says to Polly, "I suppose they made you a clerk or something" (98), but when Polly corrects this to "outfitter" they both accept this as of equivalent status.

It is clear, however, that there are some occupations which, though in one sense respectable, are nonetheless by common assent held to be "low". Uncle Penstemon is contemptuous of the Larkins family's pretensions and knows how to rile Mrs Larkins. Their exchanges illustrate the importance accorded to particular ways of earning a living:

He turned on Mrs Larkins. "Gals in service?" he asked.
"They are'nt and they won't be," said Mrs Larkins (96).
Later he says to Polly:
"Them girls pretend to be dressmakers."
"They are dressmakers," said Mrs Larkins across the room (98).
But he does not let up:
"Lets lodgin's and chars," he commented. "Leastways she goes out to cook dinners. And look at 'em! Dressed up to the nines. If it ain't borryd clothes, that is. And they goes out to work at a factory!" (103)
This is the clinching argument and it goes unchallenged by the assembled company; presumably Mrs Larkins is out of earshot because the final word in this statement is another she finds unacceptable. Mr Polly is later told that Minnie has "got some work at the carpet place" (151) and Minnie returns later that evening "with some vague grievance against the

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7 Wells's depiction of clerks, and his characters' attitudes towards the job are markedly different from E.M Forster's portrayal of Leonard Bast in Howard's End, for instance, or T.S Eliot's account of the "small house agent's clerk" in The Waste Land. Even Masterman, who is more sympathetic than many middle-class writers to the working and lower-middle-classes, shows barely concealed distaste for what he describes as the world of "clerkdom" in From the Abyss (1902).
manager of the carpet-making place" (154) but significantly the word "factory" is never once mentioned by the Larkins.

The hegemonic process is clearly at work in references to "being in service", which is regarded by the characters as the lowest of all occupations. Kipps is always careful not to reveal much about his background; he does not disclose, for instance, that his aunt and uncle own a toy-shop, "and to tell any one that his uncle had been a butler - a servant! - would have been the maddest of indiscretions" (Kipps 120). All the assistants at the Emporium are equally reticent, "so great is their horror of lowness of any sort" (120). Although there are attempts to gloss over such matters, efforts to represent them favourably by changing the signifiers are greeted with scorn. When Kipps returns to New Romney for Christmas after he has become an apprentice, he hopes to see Ann Pornick but he discovers that "she too had happened on evil things" (48). Old Kipps sneers at the Pornicks' attempt to represent the affair in as favourable a light as possible: "She's gone as help to Ashford, my boy. Help! Slavey is what we used to call 'em, but times are changed. Wonder they didn't say lady-'elp while they was about it. It 'ud be like 'em" (48). Much later in the book, Kipps is relieved to discover that there is more of his legacy left than he had expected: "You see, Ann, we'll be able to start a shop, we'll be able to get into something like. All about our 'aving to go back to places and that - all that doesn't matter any more" (405). The distinction between owning a shop and being driven into paid employment is obviously a crucial one, and although "position" or "situation" are accepted terms for the retail trade, "place" points more clearly to living-in as a shop assistant or a domestic servant, and carries significant overtones of being acted-upon, of being put into, and kept in, a particular social niche.

The lower-middle-class snobbery and fear of "lowness" is not, however, Wells's main target in the Edwardian novels. Such fears are present at all social levels. In Kipps the young ladies of the drapery are careful to observe a certain decorum in their relations with the opposite sex lest their behaviour should resemble "the walking out habits" of servant girls, for, says the narrator:

The shop young lady in England has just the same horror of doing anything that savours of the servant girl as the lady journalist,
let us say, has of anything savouring of the shop-girl, or the really quite nice young lady has of anything savouring of any sort of girl who has gone down into the economic battlefield to earn herself a living.... (53)

As this passage shows, the narrator mocks all such social distinctions, and the novel makes it clear that class anxiety is felt by all levels of Folkestone society. It is because the "boundary of Society" is so close to the likes of the Walsinghams and the Cootes that the proprieties of various codes are observed so meticulously. Helen urges Kipps to be less elaborate in his dress: "It makes you look like a shop... like a common well-off person" (216), and although Coote "cuts" Kipps's Emporium friends as a matter of principle, it is Pearce's cheerful enquiry, " Been kep' late at business?" that causes him to turn pale (247).

Wells had ample opportunity to note such fine distinctions. For eight years he earned a precarious living whilst serving his apprenticeship as a writer. After the publication of The Time Machine in 1895, however, literary success came rapidly and with it the social status Edwardian society accorded the professional writer. Between 1893 and 1896 Wells's income rose from £400 to £1,000 per annum (Autobiography 375), and he recalls how, in the early years of the century, he and his new wife found themselves "getting on", adding "At first it was very exciting and then it became less marvellous" ((Autobiography 636). This early excitement is clearly conveyed in the preface Wells wrote for a Russian edition of his works in 1909. He describes a literary career as "one of the modern forms of adventure" and there is an engaging, almost breathless, explanation of the ways in which recognition as a writer breaks down class barriers:

One is lifted out of one's narrow circumstances into familiar and unrestrained intercourse with a great variety of people. One sees the world. One meets philosophers, scientific men, soldiers, artists, professional men, politicians of all sorts, the rich, the great, and one may make such use of them as one can. One finds oneself no longer reading in books and papers but hearing and touching at first hand the big discussions that sway men, the initiatives that shape human affairs....I have friends and
intimates now at almost every social level from that of a peer to that of a pauper, and I find my sympathies and curiosities stretching out like a thin spider's web from top to bottom of the social tangle. ("My Lucky Moment")

The feeling of exuberance and liberation in this passage is striking. The use of the impersonal "one", as though the writer has scarcely come to terms with his new identity, the pile-up of categories - "philosophers, scientific men" and so on - the immediacy of "hearing and touching" as opposed to the distanced "reading", combine to produce an effect of a man who, like his own George Ponderevo, has been "hit by some unusual transverse force" (Tono-Bungay 3). The passage gives support to John Huntingdon's paper, "Wells and Social Class," which offers an ingenious and persuasive interpretation of an early short story, "The Hammerpond Park Burglary" (1895). This story focuses on language as a social indicator.

Huntingdon argues that although Wells was later to deny the reality and significance of class divisions, in the early work his "rage at the inequities of the class structure" is never far below the surface. This story is about a burglar, Teddy Watkins, who poses as a painter in order to keep watch on Hammerpond House, which contains Lady Aveling's jewels. Watkins' disguise gives him a legitimate reason for being close to the world of the aristocracy, but he has problems with the language required of an artist and fails to understand the aesthetic terms used by passers-by who ask questions about his painting. After a series of complications involving another burglar, Watkins finds himself, to his astonishment, fêted as a hero and is invited to spend the night in the house. By dawn, both Watkins and the jewels have disappeared - only the deserted easel remains. Huntingdon concludes: "If, as I suspect, the original readers took pleasure in seeing the burglar's failure to speak or understand the aesthetic jargon of the wealthy, Wells himself may have taken an equal pleasure in depicting the burglar's triumph despite his verbal failures" (27). Thus the story can be read as "successfully mocking the basis of its own success" (31) and, claims Huntingdon, can be related to Wells's view of his own achievement, "an allegory of how to use aesthetics to break into the upper class" (27).
Wells liked to view himself as a cheeky cockney, cocking a snook at the establishment\(^8\) and in his utopias he envisages classless societies in which there would be no hereditary governing elite, and class-consciousness - together with its linguistic indicators - would itself have disappeared. But this is only one side of the coin. In the society in which he lived he had to cope, despite his success - perhaps partly because of it - with a variety of snobbish reactions. Throughout his life Wells made no attempt to conceal his background and was at pains to point out that he had not been unduly impressed by acquaintance with the rich and famous. He even claims an advantage over novelists like Gissing, Meredith and Henry James whose novels show signs of a belief that "'up there somewhere' there are Great Ladies, of a knowledge, understanding and refinement, passing the wit of common men" (Autobiography 634), because his own early experiences of "life below stairs" had served to "dispel any delusion that social superiority is more than an advantage of position" (634).

There are, however, indications that Wells was more upset by snobbish rejection than he was prepared to admit. In Joan and Peter (1918), for instance, there is a self-consciously facetious passage in which Oswald Sydenham, anxious to ensure the right kind of education for his charges, is worried by the influence that contemporary writers may exert:

Most of these irregulars he disliked by nature and tradition. None of them had the dignity and restraint of the great Victorians....the social origins of most of the crew were appalling, Bennett was a solicitor's clerk from the potteries, Wells a counter-jumper, Orage came from Leeds. Oswald had seen a picture of Wells by Max that confirmed his worst suspicions about these people; a heavy bang of hair assisted a cascade of moustache

\[^8\] The 1988 Exhibition, "The Edwardian Era", at the Barbican Art Gallery, included a photograph of a stained glass panel, "Fabians at the Forge", by Caroline Townshend, who was an active member of the Fabian Society. The panel, which dates from 1910, depicts Bernard Shaw and Sidney Webb hammering the world into shape, while in the bottom left-hand corner, H.G. Wells, who left the Fabians in 1903, is depicted thumbing his nose at the Society ("The Edwardian Era" catalogue 131).
to veil a pasty face that was broad rather than long and with a sly, conceited expression; the creature still wore a long and crumpled frock coat, acquired no doubt during his commercial phase, and rubbed together two large, clammy, white, misshapen hands. (341-2)

This description is significant in at least two ways. Firstly, it seems to the reader - in the context of the passage as a whole - to be unnecessarily lengthy and detailed, therefore possibly more revealing of the writer's state of mind than the character's. Secondly, although he links himself with other writers in this passage, Wells must have been aware that his own origins were humbler than those of either of the others. Certainly there is abundant evidence that for many members of the upper and professional classes, Wells remained throughout his life "a counter-jumper" - his publisher, Macmillan, for instance, would not invite him to dinner - and as late as 1926, Mrs "Sappho" Dawson Scott, founder of PEN, was rejoicing that she had persuaded John Galsworthy to be the Society's first president. "He was made for it," she is reported

9 Wells knew that Bennett's father had managed to qualify as a solicitor and the family's status had risen accordingly. Although his father had gambled away his patrimony, Orage was born into a "county" family in Huntingdonshire which traced its origins to Huguenot émigrés. The Dictionary of National Biography indicates that by far the majority of the writers who were Wells's contemporaries were of middle- and upper-middle-class origins. And this does not apply only to highly-regarded authors; even the writers whose work Wells declares to be second-rate in his 1890's reviews tend to have solid middle-class backgrounds: Richard le Gallienne was the son of a brewery manager, Ian Maclaren was a clergyman, Rider Haggard was the son of William Meyerbohm Rider Haggard of Braddenham Hall, Norfolk. There were a few authors such as D.H Lawrence (but he belonged to a younger generation) and W.W. Jacobs who came from working class families, but Wells appears to be one of the few well-known writers of that period to have emerged from the lower-middle class.

10 In an article charting the changing relationships between authors and publishers, Anthony Burgess writes: "Macmillan was too snobbish to invite the best-selling H.G Wells to dinner: 'Began life as a counter-jumper, you know. Damned fellow might steal the spoons.'" The Observer, 28th August, 1988.
as saying, "And he's a gentleman. H.G. isn't. Nor Arnold [Bennett]"
(qtd. in Marjorie Watts 98). It could be argued, therefore, that in
a society and in a literary culture where class attitudes remained so
strong, H.G. Wells, despite his income and his position in the
intelligensia, never lost his sense of class-consciousness and never,
whatever his protestations to the contrary, ceased to be aware of the
reality and importance of class divisions.

Language can, as I have argued, be used as a means of establishing
hegemony and social cohesion but it also serves as an instrument of
separation and repression. Since at least the Tudor period, speech has
functioned as a social class indicator, but this has become more marked
during the last two centuries. Tony Crowley argues, in his account of

11 Marjorie Watts quotes from Stephen Southwold (My Writing Life)
in which he recalls a conversation with Sappho (nicknamed Bunty) about
the founding of P.E.N. She began:

"'We must have a president, and he must be big enough to act as a magnet
to draw in all the rest. And there's only one man can do that just
now.'

'Wells,' said I. 'Oh, my dear Bunty. Not H.G. He's the last man.
Dozens wouldn't come in if Wells was president. Think again.'

'You don't mean Shaw?'

'You're not very bright tonight. He's even worse than dear H.G.'

'You don't mean Galsworthy?'

But I do mean Galsworthy. He was made for it. And everyone will
come in like sheep following the shepherd. He hasn't an enemy. He is
charming, delightful, a pleasant speaker, has infinite tact. And he's a
gentleman. H.G. isn't. Nor Arnold [Bennett] - not that I thought of
asking him'" (98).

12 The beginnings of social stratification in language use are
evident centuries before this. Mediaeval scholars locate the end of the
dialectal period of Middle English in the fourteenth century, citing the
evidence of Chaucer's "Reeve's Tale". In this story the Northumbrian
dialect of the two Cambridge scholars is presented as a source of
humour, indicating that the East Midland dialect of London and the South
East was already regarded as the standard (See Robinson 688; Strang 160;
N.F. Blake 166). It was in the third quarter of the eighteenth century,
however, that the foundations of modern attitudes to social class in
language were laid. H.C Wyld ascribes this to social changes in the
class structure: "It was the new men and their families, who were
winning a place in the great world and in public affairs, who would be
attracted by the refinement offered by the new and 'correct' system of
pronunciation..." (285).
the development of the concept of "standard English" in The Politics of Discourse, that the portrayal of working-class discourse as "defective" and "sub-standard" became more marked throughout the nineteenth century "and towards the end of the century the process hardens" (157). During the period in which Wells was writing his early novels, then, the reading public was very much aware of the ways in which language varieties linked with class divisions. Nowadays linguists stress that so-called aesthetic and "moral" statements about language use are in fact concealed social judgements. Halliday points out that "In a hierarchical social structure such as is characteristic of our culture, the values that are assigned to linguistic variants are social values, and variation serves as a symbolic expression of the social structure" (Language as a Social Semiotic 156), but at the turn of the century even language specialists were sure that what was regarded as the standard was an ideal form of pure English to which all English speakers should conform - and be made to conform. Any deviations from this standard form were seen as a degeneration.¹³

The most obvious form of variation has always been the pronunciation of spoken language. G.K Chesterton, born in 1874 - seven years later than Wells - into an established professional family, recalls in his autobiography the weight given by the middle class at that time to "correct" English:

It attached rather too much importance to spelling correctly; it attached enormous importance to speaking correctly. And it did

¹³ Robert Bridges, the Poet Laureate, who helped found the Society for Pure English, in 1913 was devoted to the task of defending the language against what he saw as the dangers of degradation, particularly evident in pronunciation. His argument purports to be aesthetic, but it embodies a barely concealed social judgement: "...active degradation is always advancing unreserved and unchecked; and in our English of today it is eating away into the last traditions and aesthetics of the language" (SPE Tract XXXV 508). He claims that his interest in language is "literary, conservative, aesthetic, artistic. I would try to save what can be saved" (510). A fervent opponent of linguistics, he deplores any attempt at a value-free, scientific study of language because, he argues, "it is no fancy to see a beauty in human speech, and to prefer one language to another on account of such beauty, and to distinguish the qualities that make the beauty. Learning that forbids such an attitude is contemptible" (511).
spell and speak correctly. There was a whole world in which nobody was any more likely to drop an "h" than to pick up a title. I early discovered, with the malice of infancy, that what my seniors were really afraid of was any imitation of the intonation and diction of the servants. I am told (to quote another hearsay anecdote) that at the age of three or four, I screamed for a hat hanging on a peg, and at last in convulsions of fury uttered the awful words, 'If you don't give it me, I'll say "'at."' I felt sure that would lay all my relations prostrate for miles around.

It is clear from what Wells has written on this subject that for his family the pronunciation "'at" would have been less cataclysmic — would, in fact, have been the norm — but there was, nonetheless, an equal concern with speech as a social marker. As Tony Crowley points out, at that period, "A single word could assign you to an inferior class and reveal a hidden history in a moment" (211).

In his autobiography, Wells recalls that despite the family's penury and its consequent servantless state, his mother's determination to "keep up the appearance of being comfortable members of that upper-servant tenant class to which her imagination had been moulded", was very strong. To that end, he records:

I was never to mix with common children, who might teach me naughty words. The Hoptons, the greengrocer's family over the way, were "rough" she thought; they were really turbulently jolly; the Mundays next door were methodists who sang hymns out of church which is almost as bad as singing songs in it....People who were not beneath us were apt to be stuck-up and unapproachable in the other direction. So my universe of discourse was rather limited. She preferred to have me indoors rather than out. (Autobiography 73)

In Wells's fiction, dropped aitches - categorised by one nineteenth century linguist as "that worst of all faults" (Henry Alford, 1864, qtd. in Crowley, 153) - figure as one of the more significant features of lower-class speech. In Tono-Bungay, George Ponderevo, son of the Bladesover housekeeper, plays with the Honourable Beatrice Normandy. When her half-brother, Archie arrives, he rejects George for
"We don't want you to play with us at all," said Archie.

"Yes we do," said Beatrice.

"He drops his aitches like anything."

"No E doesn't," said I, in the heat of the moment.

"There you go!" he cried. "E, he says. E! E! E!" (43)

For Kipps, too, this is an aspect of pronunciation which causes particular problems and Helen selects it as the one on which he should concentrate. After Chitterlow's elocution lessons, however, Kipps is far more confused: "Hitherto he had discarded that dangerous letter almost altogether, but now he would pull up at words beginning with 'h' and draw a sawing breath - rather like a startled kitten - and then aspirate with vigour" (Kipps 237).

Dropped aitches are perhaps the most characteristic feature of cockney speech, and although he was born in Bromley, Wells always referred to his native accent as cockney. He commends his first schoolmaster, for helping him acquire the ability to use English with precision and delicacy, "even if the accent was a cockney one" (91). When considering the significance of accent in Wells's work it is important to remember that at least until the Second World War, it was customary to define Received Pronunciation, as that exemplified in the speech of educated, cultivated and well-bred people - "the best speakers" (Crowley 148). Professor H.C Wyld, one of the most influential authorities in linguistics at this period asserted: "if we were to say that Received English at the present day is 'Public School English' we would not be far wrong" (3). What is more, Wyld makes a distinction between what he regards as true RP and what he terms "Modified Standard", a language variety which may have been changed by education, but still bears the traces of the speaker's regional or class origins. Education, he stresses, does not in itself ensure that aspiring entrants to the middle-classes will acquire RP; it can result in "hyper-correction" and "over-careful pronunciation" (4), and in a paper written in 1934, Wyld claims that only those born into a particular linguistic community will
ever be able to speak English with complete naturalness (qtd. in Crowley 192-3). Although Wells, as evidenced by his BBC broadcasts of the 1930's, learned to speak with an accent which sounds to the 1990 ear unexceptionably middle-class, it is possible that he never entirely lost traces of his cockney accent. Dorothy Richardson draws on her relationship with Wells in her novel, The Tunnel, where he appears as Hypo Wilson, the novelist husband of the heroine's schoolfriend. When the heroine is first introduced to Wilson, she is struck by "A cockney voice with a common twang. Overwhelming" (112). The actor Charles Chaplin recalls that a decade or so later Wells was still showing sensitivity about his accent: "I remember once he aspirated an 'h' in the wrong place and blushed to the roots of his hair" (375).

The extent to which early experiences shape the attitudes of any individual is a matter of speculation, but it is now a commonplace in sociolinguistics that hostile responses to children's native language varieties can have a lasting effect on their development. It cannot be without significance, therefore, both for the formation of his own attitudes and for the use he makes of the cockney dialect in his fiction, that during the years of Wells's upbringing, London English was regarded as unquestionably the most inferior of all variations. Wyld, in A History of Modern Colloquial English distinguishes Regional Dialects from class variations (3). "The London cockney of the streets," he asserts, "we should not hesitate to describe as vulgar" (7). "Pure" rural dialects were tolerated, even approved by the turn of the century, but cockney was not accorded the status of a dialect; it was regarded as a debased and inferior form of English which must be suppressed at all costs. The Report of the English Association Conference on the Teaching of English in Elementary Schools, 1909, comments: "The debased dialect in Lancashire is nothing to the dialect of the cockney, which is spreading from our schools and training colleges all over the country. In ten years' time the English language will not be worth speaking." (English Association Bulletin No.7, 6).

Thirty years later, William Matthews begins Cockney Past and Present with the resounding statement: "Of all the non-standard forms of English, Cockney is one of the most generally despised and down-trodden"
This strong antipathy towards cockney speech arises from a number of anxieties. Paradoxically it was both the potential strength and the actual weakness of the poor which gave rise to anxiety in the Edwardian period. The established classes were afraid of the rise of the urban working-classes to political power, but there were also more subtle causes for anxiety. At the turn of the century there were widespread fears that the British nation was in decline — by 1902, the army had found sixty percent of Englishmen to be unfit for military service in the South African war — and that the causes of this were in some way connected with life in the slums, with urban degeneration and the severing of roots. Samuel Hynes, in *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, locates the cause of this anxiety in the doctrines of Social Darwinism:

> The idea of natural selection inevitably turns up whenever Edwardians discuss the physical condition of the people, for it seemed possible (and if possible, then frightening) that what was observed as physical deterioration was in fact a biological adjustment of the species to the new and degrading conditions of urban life. (25)

This feeling is evident in a number of contemporary novels. In E.M Forster's *The Longest Journey*, for instance, the robust countryman, Stephen Wonham, is appalled by his first sight of London: "The London intellect, so pert and shallow, like a stream that never reaches the ocean, disgusted him almost as much as the London physique, which for all its dexterity is not permanent, and seldom continues into the third generation" (246). This accounts for the insurance clerk, Leonard Bast, in *Howards End*, stooped, narrow-shouldered, who is depicted as the product of London: "One guessed him as the third generation, grandson to the shepherd or ploughboy whom civilization had sucked into the town; as one of the thousands who have lost the life of the spirit" (122). In literary terms this feeling had particular consequences because it carried over into attitudes towards London speech. Keating points out in *The Working Classes in Victorian Fiction* that in novels by Mrs Gaskell and George Eliot in the mid-nineteenth century, a regional dialect had been used to symbolize a whole way of life; non-standard
language use could thus be seen as an instrument of social cohesion.
Cockney, on the other hand, achieves a very different effect: "It
divides rather than unites the classes; it serves to heighten social
divisions rather than lessen them; it indicates a type of speech common
in a specific area, but shows a lack of 'culture' on the part of the
speaker" (247). In the literary tradition that Wells inherited,
therefore, cockney speakers were not only "placed" socially, they were
also assumed to be uneducated, even - for some of the reasons I have
indicated - a danger to the status quo.

Although Wells does include phonetic representations of rural and,
ocasionally, foreign accents in his fiction, in the main his non-
standard speakers use a form of cockney. As William Matthews shows in
Cockney Past and Present, the representation of cockney speech is part
of a long literary tradition and by the 1880's it had become highly
stylized, preserving forms used by Dickens which may never have been

14 Linguists have advanced a number of explanations for the
favouring of rural dialects. Wyld argues that rural accents were less
castigated than non-standard urban ones because the land-owning class
kept its roots in the country and thus "It was possible to speak with a
rustic accent and still be a gentleman" (Modern Colloquial English 167).
Barbara Strang suggests that the growth of London was a crucial factor
in the development of "speech levels": "Our knowledge of urban speech-
varieties and their origins is very limited, but it does seem to be a
usual consequence of the mixing in an urban community that social
stratification develops as geographical affiliations are blurred" (105).
Linguistic theory demonstrates this by means of the "sociolinguistic
triangle" or pyramid in which social class variation (vertical axis) is
plotted against regional variation (horizontal axis). The broad base of
the triangle corresponds to the lowest social class and the broadest
local accents, the apex of the triangle corresponds to the highest class
and RP speakers. J.C Wells comments: "Any regional accent is by
definition not an upper-class accent, and hardly an upper-middle class
accent because in those social classes such accent differences as do
exist are not regional. The more localizable (and hence non-upper-
class) characteristics an accent has, the 'broader' we say it is" (1:
14).
part of actual London speech; as a contemporary writer and journalist, Andrew Tuer, put it, writers were copying other writers rather than listening to the pronunciations they heard around them. In the 1870s came what Keating refers to as an "upsurge of interest in the East End of London" (Introduction, Working Class Stories of the 1890s xi), and a number of factors, such as the sociological studies of East End life and the settlement movement, focused sympathetic attention on various aspects of urban life, and this was followed by the "Cockney School" fiction of the 1890s. This work, together with Tuer's own books helped establish a new convention for representing the cockney accent, and Wells's selection of features corresponds in the main with this.15

15 In the Notes to Captain Brassbound's Conversion (1900), Shaw includes a section on English and American dialects in which he explains his reasons for rendering the speech of the sailor, Felix Drinkwater, phonetically. He refers to Andrew Tuer, who had in the 1880s called attention to the disparity between modern cockney and "the obsolescence of the Dickens' dialect that was still being copied from book to book by authors who never dreamt of using their ears, much less training them to listen" (346). Tuer's contribution to literary cockney is discussed by William Matthews (ch.3), Julian Franklyn (Bk 3, ch.3) and Keating (The Working Classes in Victorian Fiction ch.10).

16 The most striking of these features are the omission of medial vowels, resulting in forms like "mis'bel" and "desp'rit", plus the omission of a number of initial consonants ("'stonishing" "'sno trouble" "'ssociate") and final consonants (the "t" from words like "toast" and "project", for instance, which stems from a neutralisation of the oppositions between /p,t,k/ in final position in cockney dialect and results in "toce" and "projekc"). Elision of words leads to "lemme" "gimme" "dunno" and "ge'm" (gentleman) "dessay" and "d'ju smoke?". The transcription also indicates a number of vowel changes: the most marked are the substitution of "er" or "'r" for "ow" as in "feller" and "yell'r", and the systematic rendering of short "a" and "u" as "e" in words like "thens" and "jest". Wells also highlights two other features of non-standard speech which are universally stigmatised - the omission of the aspirate and the replacement of the dental fricatives, [θ] by labiodentals, [f] and [v] respectively, which in Kipps results in "togevever" "granfaver" "fousand" and "bref" (breath). One distinguishing feature of Kipps's speech, which could be termed part of his idiolect because the frequency of the usage marks him off from Wells's other lower middle-class heroes, is a tendency to transfer the "n" of the indefinite article "an" to the following word when the latter begins with a vowel. He generally speaks of "a Nawther" and "a Nacter", for instance, and refers to himself as "a Norfan". Tuer mentions all these features as characteristic of actual as opposed to literary cockney speech.
b) Linguistic Convention and Social Class: The Early Fiction

There is no way, of course, in which the writer can capture all the features of spoken language except by a detailed phonetic transcription which would be of interest only to the specialist. This was an issue Thomas Hardy considered in relation to Dorset dialect. Most likely with the example of his predecessor the poet William Barnes in mind, he wrote:

If a writer attempts to exhibit on paper the precise accents of a rustic speaker he disturbs the proper balance of a true representation by unduly insisting upon the grotesque element; thus directing attention to a point of inferior interest, and diverting it from the speaker's meaning. (Orel 91)

Another important consideration is ease of reading. Tuer felt it necessary to print a Standard English translation alongside the phonetic representation of cockney in his books. Shaw too, despite his claims for the accuracy and value of his phonetic rendering of speech in Captain Brassbound's Conversion, gives up the attempt in Pygmalion after Eliza Doolittle's first speech, with the comment: "Here, with apologies, this desperate attempt to represent her dialect without a phonetic alphabet must be abandoned as unintelligible outside London" (16).

Ultimately, phonetic transcription is a less important factor than idiomatic rhythm. As Julian Franklyn points out in Cockney, "the best written cockney is not hidden in a cascade of normally unrelated letters needing careful sorting to reveal the word but stands out clearly from the page, cockney in its idiom, in the sentiments expressed, in the manner of its delivery; phonetic only in easily recognisable words" (237).

Wells selects a small range of dialect features, and makes no attempt to use them consistently. Keating praises Kipling because the transliteration of cockney in "Badalia Herodsfoot" is "consistent throughout" (261), but this would be an unreasonable demand of the fiction writer. Apart from the fact that too many deviations from standard orthography make reading hard work and thus can become tiresome for the reader, there is no linguistic justification for such
consistency. As Traugott and Pratt stress: "differences between varieties often involve not the bare presence or absence of the form but the quantitative likelihood of the form being used or not used" (313). To ignore this is to blur the distinction between variety defined by reference to the speaker (dialectal variation) and register, defined by reference to the situation in which the speech takes place (diatypic variation). Human speakers are not consistent in the sense that their utterances take the same form whatever the context. The American sociolinguist William Labov makes a distinction between "indicators", linguistic features which are used by each individual in more or less the same way in any context, and "markers", features which vary according to the amount of attention the individual is giving to his speech. Indicators reveal social stratification, markers have a more stylistic dimension (Giglioli 283). As I shall show, Wells's use of dialect, particularly in his major fiction, takes account of these "sociolinguistic variables". Inconsistency in the representation of dialect features in fiction may, of course, be distracting and irritating to the reader if it appears to be arbitrary and unmotivated but, handled sensitively, it can enable fictional dialogue to sound more akin to natural speech and thus create a greater illusion of reality.

A striking feature of Wells's approach to non-standard usage in his early fiction is the way in which he over-turns linguistic as well as literary conventions in order to unsettle, often to challenge, the reader's expectations. At the period when Wells was writing his early fiction, ideas about standard English were attracting considerable attention from historians and educators as well as linguists. As Tony Crowley demonstrates in *The Politics of Discourse*, standard English was, in fact, acquiring a political dimension; differences in class usage which were clearly a socially divisive factor, were deplored, whilst the idea of a common, unifying language was promoted enthusiastically - in terms of Bakhtin's distinction between the centripetal and centrifugal forces of language discussed in the last chapter, this was a period when the centripetal tendency was dominant. The problem was to offer an objective definition of standard. One solution was offered by the appearance of the New Oxford English Dictionary - based on the history
of literary English - between 1888 and 1933. The OED established the written form as one of the most important determinants of the standard, and this remains a generally accepted view. Halliday emphasises that not only does the standard dialect possess a special status in all languages, in many cultures it is equated with and referred to as the "literary" or written mode (Language as a Social Semiotic 157).

With this in mind, it seems possible that Wells, who was always keenly aware of the social stratification of speech forms, is playing an elaborate joke on the reader in his 1897 "A Story of Days to Come." The central idea of the story is that over the centuries class divisions have widened and become less surmountable, but Wells explicitly states at the outset that the language of the twenty-second century had remained unchanged from that of the nineteenth, which enables him to use standard English for the upper- and middle-class speakers and cockney dialect for the Labour Company workers, who live and work underground. One of the few examples of written language given in the book is a description of a vast four hundred foot illuminated advertisement on the facade of the Suzannah Hat Syndicate building in Regent Street which flashes the message "SUZANNA! 'ETS! SUZANNA ETS'. At the same time the accompanying batteries of phonographs are roaring "'hats...Why don't you buy a girl a hat?'" and in addition:

For the benefit of those who chance to be deaf - and deafness was not uncommon in the London of that age, inscriptions of all sizes were thrown from the roof above upon the moving platforms themselves, and on one's hand or on the bald head of the man before one, or on a lady's shoulders, or in a sudden jet of flame before one's feet, the moving finger wrote in unanticipated letters of fire "'ets r chip t'de", or simply "ets". (58)

Michael Draper refers to this as "up-market cockney" (33). There are, certainly, clear links with the vowel sounds and dropped aspirates of cockney, and what is more, there is in this story an emphasis on phonetic spelling - we are told, for instance that the heroine, whose name would in the nineteenth century be spelt "Elizabeth Morris", now writes "ElizabeG Mwres" (19). The written message is aimed at potential customers, and this means the standard English speaking middle- and
upper-classes, not the dialect-speaking wearers of the blue canvas who service the shops but cannot afford to buy their products. The reader, then, is left with a paradox. If he is to accept the narrator's assurance that pronunciation has remained unchanged - and the message of the phonographs is, after all, rendered in traditional orthography - then it follows that it is not speech but the written form of the language (that lodestone of orthodoxy) that has changed considerably over two hundred years. Not only that, it has changed in the direction of the most despised and suppressed form - urban cockney!

The scientific romance form provided Wells with opportunities for subtle attacks on class-based attitudes towards language, but his attempts to achieve social realism in the novel brought him up against constraints. Keating points out in The Working Classes in Victorian Fiction that one of the major problems for any author wanting to convey the quality of working class speech was to find a way of indicating bad language (248). For Victorian and Edwardian writers there were strict rules about what was acceptable in print, and realism had to be sacrificed to propriety. Wells has recourse to a number of methods. He relies on euphemistic phrases which convey a flavour of what the reader is missing such as "a huge navvy cursing in fragments" (The Invisible Man 237), "virile blasphemies" (The Food of the Gods 139), "ejaculations restrained in tone but not in quantity" (Bealby 21) and so on, whilst in a short story, "The Temptation of Haringay", in which the narrative is based on an account of an improbable experience written by another, the narrator comments primly: "Then he said a wicked word. In the original the word is given" (239). Less conventionally, he attempts to shock the reader into an awareness of the absurdity of the limitation imposed on the author, whilst at the same time suggesting the increasing violence of imprecations which eventually have to be censored altogether. In Bealby a character discovers that the caravan he is stealing from is in motion, and the typography indicates his reactions as he careers down the hill:

[William] attempted the door.

"Crikey! Here! Hold on! My shin! .... 'Tis thut Brasted Vool of a
In The History of Mr Polly it is essential to convey the violence of Uncle Jim's language since it signifies the violence of his personality. Wells substitutes "blurry" for "bloody", and the most offensive epithets are replaced by descriptive terms. Mr Polly is threatened with "sanguinary, oriental and soul-blenching things" (330) and Uncle Jim shouts: "We ain't doing a (sanguinary) Marathon. It ain't a (decorated) cinder track....No need to be so (richly decorated) proud" (315). Wells also brings out a parallel between the constraints imposed on the novelist's use of language and the limitations placed by authority on individual action - one of the central ideas of the novel. At the height of the battle, when Polly has pushed him into the river, Uncle Jim splutters: "You (unprofitable matter, and printing it might lead to a Censorship of Novels) - You know I got a weak chess!" (331). In the most obvious sense, of course, Wells is satirising the convention he is obliged to observe, but it could also be argued that he is patronising Jim because the joke depends on the middle-class reader's complacent smile. Both author and reader share a sense of superiority
with regard to the use of "base" language. But is the sense of superiority as simple as that? Wells is employing the contrast between different levels of discourse (the voice of the narrator conforming to official demands and the futile ill-pronounced splutterings of Jim) to evoke humour but at the same time he is juxtaposing the dictat of officialdom with the plight of the individual. The effect is to arouse a degree of sympathy for the egregious Jim at the moment of his complete overthrow. In this good-humoured novel, even the least appealing characters are seen as to some extent victims of the system. As the Fat Woman's account of Jim's early history has already made clear, even allowing for all his faults, he has never had much of a chance against official authority: "'There was always something a bit wrong with him,' she said; 'but nothing you mightn't have hoped for, not till they took him, and carried him off, and reformed him'" (309).

Another linguistic literary convention which Wells challenged was the assumption that only lower-class or regional accents should be indicated through deviant spelling. Logically there is no reason why only non-standard varieties should be represented phonetically since English spelling does not represent any dialect - not even the one rendered by received pronunciation - phonetically, but the important consideration for the writer is that the reader assumes that it does.17 In his book on Dickens, Edwin Pugh, one of the Cockney School of novelists, inveighs against the convention by which novelists represent middle- and upper-class speech by traditional spelling whilst the deviant features of lower-class speech are transcribed remorselessly, "though it is demonstrable that the cockney accent is not a whit more inaccurate than the University accent; and that the West End speaks with about the same disregard of the mother-tongue as the East End" (280-81).

17 In his Notes to Captain Brassbound's Conversion, Shaw brings out the social dimension implicit in all aspects of language usage. He admits that it is illogical to present the cockney and American dialects phonetically while rendering Lady Cicily Waynflete's speech in traditional orthography but claims that the native speaker of English would be outraged by anything else because "He imagines that any departure from conventional spelling indicates a departure from the correct standard of good society" (345).
He cites H.G Wells as the only author who has realised this and has altered his spelling to convey the sound of upper-class pronunciation.

The example Pugh quotes comes from the scientific fantasy, *In the Days of the Comet*. This book is set in the Four Towns (Wells's version of Arnold Bennett's Five Towns), a pottery district in the Midlands, which at the beginning of the book is seething with industrial unrest. Leadford, the narrator, who is a committed socialist, is describing a confrontation between an angry crowd of coal miners and the arrogant Lord Redcar, a prominent landlord and owner of the largest coal-mine in the district. He is accompanied by his friend, Edward Verrall. As the anger of the crowd increases, "His big flat voice counselled young Verrall - 'Cut, Teddy! It won't do. The picketa's got i'on Babs....'" (91) ["The picket's got iron bars"] In this instance the emphasis given to Redcar's accent is presumably designed to draw attention to the gap between Leadford and the man who, says Leadford, "seemed a symbol, a triumphant symbol of all that the theory of aristocracy claims, of all that filled my soul with resentment" (87), and the ugliness of class conflict in the first half of the book is given maximum impact as a contrast to the universal harmony brought about by "the Change". In *Kipps*, too, Wells uses deviant spellings to indicate upper-middle-class accents. Mr Chester Coote's first direct address to Kipps after the latter has received his legacy is, "What are you doang hea?" (152) and he speaks of the "papah" he has been delivering (154). *Kipps* is a book which explores through humour the absurdities and cruelties of a class system which distorts values and impoverishes sympathies and Wells is concerned to show that so-called "correct" speech is no more nor less absurd than that of Kipps.

Nonetheless, Wells employs the device sparingly. In *Kipps* it is reserved for Coote, the most comic of the representatives of Folkestone Society, and apart from the passage I have quoted and one spelling of "time" as "taime" and "nice" as "nace" on six subsequent occasions (foregrounded possibly because this is the one genteel usage Kipps himself essays) there are no other attempts to render the speech of the genteel characters phonetically. There are surely practical reasons for this. Although social justice would seem to require even-handed
treatment of all speech forms, and Wells clearly has no desire to endorse upper-class accents, any attempt to represent all speech phonetically would soon become unworkable in a novel which aspired to social realism. This is because linguistic norms in written language are indispensable. The use of deviant spellings and non-standard syntax defamiliarises the text and calls attention to its internal structure, thus encouraging the reader to look away to some extent from the referential aspect of discourse - in terms of Halliday's Systemic Grammar, the focus would then be on the textual rather than the ideational function of language - and this cancels out the most important feature of realist discourse: that it purports to be referential. Thus, although, particularly in his early writing, Wells goes out of his way to challenge a number of linguistic conventions, this is one that, in the main, he observes.

The device of using deviant spelling to indicate upper-middle and upper-class usages is, then, used sparingly in Wells's fiction. When it occurs, there is always a political point to be made because particular ways of speaking signify power and authority. In *In the Days of the Comet* the representation of Redcar's speech highlights his arrogance, in *Kipps* we are reminded by this means of the tenacity with which Chester Coote, constrained by a limited income, clings to the outward markers of a gentleman. At all levels, those who aspire to a higher social status essay the accents of their "superiors", and in his novels, Wells explores the ways in which the mores and linguistic habits of the upper-classes affect the men and women who work for them. *The Dream* presents Uncle John Julip who, after years in service has become a "secondary aristocrat" (64); in fact, comments the narrator: "None of the people round and about the downstairs of Chessing Hanger had natural manners; all were dealing in some more or less plausible imitation of some real lady or gentleman" (62). In a hierarchical society "natural manners" are a luxury which only those at the top of the social pyramid can afford.

In *Tono-Bungay* the effects of "Bladesovery", which ensured that everyone accepted his or her place in the social structure of the English countryside (13), are exemplified in the unquestioned hierarchy
and strict etiquette of the housekeeper's room at Bladesover, and Wells indicates the quality of an upper-class accent when rendered at second-hand. Young George Ponderevo is required to sit through lengthy tea-parties with the pensioned-off servants who are making their yearly visit and he notes how each of these people has been affected by the linguistic usages of former employers. Miss Booch restricts herself to "a small set of stereotyped remarks that constituted her entire mental range" (19), whilst Mr Rabbit, the butler, pronounces "do" as "dew", although he does not sound his aitches; this is because he "had acquired from some clerical model a precise emphatic articulation without acquiring at the same time the aspirates that would have graced it" (22). Most notable is Mrs Mackridge, who had once been maid to the widow of Sir Roderick Blenderhasset Impey, a former governor in the East Indies. George concludes, from "her remains" in Mrs Mackridge, that "Lady Impey had been of the Juno type, haughty, unapproachable, given to irony and a caustic wit" (19). Mrs Mackridge lacks the wit but has retained the hauteur: "when she was spoken to she had a way of acknowledging your poor tinkle of utterance with a voluminous, scornful 'Haw!' that made you want to burn her alive. She also had a way of saying 'Indade!' with a droop of the eyelids" (19). The remains of Lady Impey's imperious accent can be detected even in Mrs Mackridge's pronunciation of vowel sounds, she says "fatt-an-ing", "anaything" (20) and "recomm-an-ding" (21). The tea-party scene is very funny, largely because the pretensions of the ex-servants echo and at the same time distort upper-class usages, thus challenging the reader's categorisations of accent and idiom. But although we laugh at these people, we are also aware of the irony of these powerless and pathetic relicts clinging to the empty linguistic forms which confirmed their servitude.

In Wells's fiction the use of non-standard English by a native speaker always has ideological significance because it always denotes social status. An analysis of his use of language varieties bears out Halliday's contention that "The social function of dialect variation is to express, symbolize and maintain the social order; and the social order is an essentially hierarchic one" (179). Wells could be sure that
the middle-class reader would immediately identify speakers of non-
standard English as either working-class or lower middle-class and most
likely as uneducated - not only because of the socio-cultural
differences in speech which were a feature of contemporary society but
also because of the long-standing literary convention which associated
certain ways of speaking with particular roles in the narrative.
Dialectal variation in fiction, therefore, must always be considered
from two perspectives: synchronically in relation to the norms current
in a particular linguistic community and diachronically in the context
of the literary genre to which it belongs. Because he could assume the
linguistic and literary assumptions of the reader, Wells is able to make
use of these in order to trick the reader into making false value
judgements.
In his earliest short stories and scientific romances, admittedly,
Wells appears to accept the usual conventions, and in The Wonderful
Visit and The Invisible Man, for instance, rural and cockney dialect
speakers tend to be allotted minor roles of a specific kind. "The
Stolen Bacillus" provides a good illustration of this. There is a group
of cabmen and loafers who play no part in the action, but function as a
kind of comic chorus as they watch the Bacteriologist set off in pursuit
of the Anarchist's cab, only to be followed by the former's wife in a
third cab. Their comments constitute the verbal equivalent of a change
of camera angle in a filmed car chase:
They were silent as it went by, and then as it receded - "That's
'Arry 'Icks. Wot's he got?" said the stout gentleman known as Old
Tootles.
"He's a-using his whip, he is, to rights," said the ostler
boy.
"Hello!" said poor old Tommy Byles; "here's another bloomin'
loonatic. Blowed if there ain't."
"It's old George," said old Tootles, "and he's drivin' a
loonatic, as you say. Ain't he a-clawin' out of the keb? Wonder
if he's after 'Arry 'Icks?"
The group around the cabmen's shelter became animated.
Chorus: "Go it, George!" "It's a race!" "You'll ketch 'em!" "Whip
up!" (199)
In these early stories, too, Wells confirms expectation by depicting non-standard speakers as uneducated. At the beginning of hostilities in *The War of the Worlds* (1898) the narrator encounters a group of soldiers guarding the bridge over the canal. They are discussing - in broad cockney - ways of dealing with the Martian fighting machines:

"Crawl up under cover and rush 'em, say I," said one.

"Get aht!" said another. "What's cover against this 'ere 'eat? Sticks to cook yer! What we got to do is to go as near as the ground'll let us, and then drive a trench."

"Blow yer trenches! You always want trenches; you ought to ha' been born a rabbit, Snippy."

"Ain't they got no necks, then?" said a third abruptly - a little, contemplative, dark man, smoking a pipe. (43)

The narrator decides that these men must be sappers and comments: "The ordinary sapper is a great deal better educated than the common soldier, and they discussed the peculiar conditions of the possible fight with some acuteness" (43). In contrast, however, the artillery man, who would presumably be categorised as a common soldier, speaks standard English throughout - with the exception, that is, of one dropped aspirate (64) and one arguably sub-standard phrase (he announces at one point that he is "grim set on leaving" 165). This is not to suggest, of course, that Wells is intending such a contrast; it is more likely that he is - perhaps unconsciously - responding to two conventions which in this case contradict one another so far as realistic depiction of speech is concerned. The contemporary reader would expect Other Ranks to speak a particular variety of English - the stereotype of Tommy Atkins was well-established at the turn of the century18 - but at the same time, characters who play a significant part in the narrative and whose views are to be taken seriously by the reader, are expected to speak the

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18 This particular assumption about speech may not have changed very much. The journalist, Ian Jack, reporting on the inquest into the death of the I.R.A. suspects in Gibraltar, in the Observer, Sunday 18th September, 1988, writes: "So what have we learnt about Britain's intelligence and security services from last week's voices behind the curtain. In truth hardly anything: that other ranks speak with 'regional' accents and officers with 'proper' ones..."
standard form. The narrator soon comes to realize that the Artillery Man is lazy and ineffective, a mere "strange undisciplined dreamer of great things" (173) who will never act, but up to that point the narrator, and the reader, have listened to his plans for an underground resistance movement with respect and some admiration. A non-standard accent would have modified the reader's response.

The convention that the characters who function as heroes or heroines speak standard English is a well-established one in the novel, however unlikely this may be if they come from a lowly background. Realism is ignored, and, what is more, the character is often discovered by the end of the book, like Dickens's Oliver Twist and Esther Summerson, to be of "gentle" birth. Even the more socially realistic novels of the 1880's and '90's tend to observe this convention. Wells criticizes Gissing for attempting "to square reality to the narrow perfections of a refined life" by making Jane Snowdon, the heroine of *The Nether World* (1889), innately noble, "one of nature's young ladies" (Parrinder and Philmus 151), despite the fact that she has received an appalling upbringing in a Clerkenwell slum.

Wells faces this problem head-on in one of his earliest stories, when he makes fun of the convention that the heroine, even if humbly-born, must speak "correct" English. In *The Wonderful Visit* the parlour maid, Delia, is not only cast as the heroine, she also plays an heroic part in the story. In a tongue-in-cheek address, the narrator mocks the socio-linguistic prejudices and the literary preconceptions of the reader, addressing himself in particular to the susceptibilities of women readers:

> I am painfully aware of the objectionable nature of my story here. I have even thought of wilfully perverting the truth to propitiate the Lady Reader. But I could not. The story has been too much for me. I do the thing with my eyes open. Delia must remain what she really was - a servant girl. I know that to give a mere servant girl, or at least an English servant girl, the refined feelings of a human being, to present her as speaking with anything but an intolerable confusion of aspirates, places me outside the pale of respectable writers. (59)

Pretending to search for a way out, he suggests: "Delia was a very
exceptional servant girl. Possibly, if one inquired, it might be found that her parentage was upper middle-class— that she was made of the finer upper middle-class clay", and he promises that in future he will redress the balance by presenting servant girls in the way the reader has come to expect, with "systematic aspiration of vowels and elimination of aspirates" (59). The promise is fulfilled. Delia speaks very little in The Wonderful Visit, but in her four short utterances there are no indications of sub-standard accent or grammar.

Although Wells was, in this passage, pointing out the absurd way in which many contemporary writers sacrificed realism and consistency in order to conform to the reader's expectations, he was also implicitly criticising and challenging the unquestioned assumptions of the middle-class reader, although he was not fully to confront these assumptions for another ten years, when he came to write Kipps. Even in his early fiction, however, it is a mistake to assume that Wells is ever merely pandering to middle-class linguistic prejudices by creating stereotypes. A good example in the 1890's short stories is "The Jilting of Jane", the slight story of a cockney servant girl who loses her young man to a socially superior shop-girl. The narrator—her middle-class employer—is, admittedly, sympathetic but he is also condescending. The main object of the story appears to be to evoke humour from lower-class social pretensions and, in particular, from Jane's speech—her young man's father was "a greengroscher" who died of a "chumor" after being "bankrup' twice" and the marriage is dignified by "a real kerridge" (Short Stories 484). Nonetheless, the story does include subtle digs at the middle-class employers, who feel increasing disquiet as they see the young couple adopting their style of dress, and, as the ending makes clear, the story is in fact a celebration of Jane's "developing character" (488) and her ultimate self-assertion. It is only when she retains social pretensions that Jane uses the intrusive aspirate—she hopes William will buy her a "hammyfist" (amethyst) ring and her master is "a hangel" (485). Inserting unnecessary aitches before vowels is associated by literary convention with cockney speech but, as Andrew
Tuer demonstrates, it is heard in reality only when East Enders are making a self-conscious attempts at "correctness". That Wells was fully aware of this distinction is shown by his portrayal of Snagsby, Sir Isaac's butler in *The Wife of Sir Isaac Harman* (1914). We are told that:

> Like all well-trained English servants, Snagsby always dropped as many "h"s as he could when conversing with his superiors. He did this as a mark of respect and to prevent social confusion, just as he was always careful to wear a slightly misfitting dress coat and fold his trousers so that they creased at the sides and had a wide flat effect in front. (101)

Throughout the book when, in moments of stress, Snagsby forgets his place and sounds his aitches (or forgets to insert them before non-aspirated vowels) he hastily goes back and "corrects" himself. As so often in Wells's fiction, the reader is unsure whether the joke is at Snagsby's expense, or at his/hers.

c) Language, Social Class and Linguistic Convention: The Novels

It is in the novels, however, that the depiction of dialectal variation becomes an overtly political statement about class divisions. Wells did not regard *The Wheels of Chance*, published in 1896, as a novel - it is sub-titled "A Holiday Adventure" and "A Bicycling Idyll" - but, although the book is a comedy, under the romantic complications of the plot lies a serious social issue, the constraints imposed by social class and the hero's struggle to escape from them. The story is slight. A draper's

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19 William Matthews claims that depictions of cockney speech changed almost overnight after Tuer's book was published. Since it is unlikely that the accent itself had changed, he concludes: "A more probable explanation is that Tuer's criticism had made the inadequacies of the old convention so obvious that to continue to use it would be to run the risk of being called old-fashioned" (159-160). He adds that despite its popularity with novelists, "as Tuer says, Cockneys prefer to save their energy on h's...they arise from a consciousness that it is incorrect to drop the aspirate, so that in attempting talk fine Cockneys were apt to insert h's before all initial vowels. It is typical of literary Cockney that it should have extended this mannerism into a general practice" (164).
assistant called Hoopdriver embarks on a bicycling holiday which involves him in a series of adventures with an upper-class young lady. These experiences make him resolved to "improve" himself, even though, at the end of the holiday, he returns to the drapery. Most critics have dismissed the book as slight and sentimental (John Batchelor H.G Wells 37, Mackenzies 113, Patrick Parrinder, Views 73) and in his introduction to a recent edition of the book, Bernard Bergonzi suggests that it lacks realism because it is essentially picaresque in its depiction of an idyllic England: "That it was at that time also a rural England afflicted by agricultural depression was not registered by Wells's cockney romanticism" (Introduction viii). What is more, the book does not come to terms with its central issue - the way class determines the relationship between Hoopdriver and Jessie Milton, the young lady he rescues. There is an uncertainty about class attitudes throughout this book, and this ambivalence is nowhere more evident than in the depiction of Hoopdriver's speech.

The extent to which fictional speech should be rendered as non-standard is one of the fundamental systemic choices a writer must make. In Love and Mr Lewisham, all the major characters belong to the impoverished lower-middle class and all are represented as speaking standard English. Ethel Henderson and the Chafferys live in Clapham, and both she and her mother would be likely to speak with a London accent but there is only one example of this in the book, when Mrs Chaffery, in one of her few contributions, asks her new son-in-law, "Hev you a mother living, Mr Lewisham?" (203) - and even this instance is problematic. Substituting 'e' for a short 'a' is certainly one of the features of Wells's depiction of cockney, but in this context it may be an indication that Mrs Chaffery is trying to impress by "gentrifying" her accent. Nonetheless, it is significant that Wells appears to have considered it inappropriate to draw attention to such class indicators as accent in a book where the plot is centred on the hero's educational aspirations. Even today, as Kress and Hodge point out in Language and

20 There are, of course, other equally important class indicators, such as register which is important in Love and Mr Lewisham and Tono-Bungay.
Ideology, the phonetic transcription of working-class speech calls forth adverse responses because, as research indicates, for most people speech is associated with educational achievement:

All utterances, and hence all utterers, are constantly subjected to classification by those who hear them. Such classifications or judgements tend to be mediated through expectations about class. They emerge as judgements about qualities of intelligence, character, etc., but they are almost invariably shaped by class assumptions. (66)

For Wells's readership in 1900 these associations would have been even stronger.

In The Wheels of Chance, however, Wells seems unable to make up his mind. At the beginning of the book, Hoopdriver speaks standard English, and at the start of his holiday his speech is explicitly contrasted with that of the heath-keeper, who accuses him of snobbish superiority

"Don't you make no remarks to 'im," said the keeper as the carter came up broadside to them. "'E's a bloomin' dook, 'e is. 'E don't converse with no one under a earl. 'E's off to Windsor, 'e is; that's why 'e's stickin' his be'ind out so 'aughty...." (27)

Hoopdriver is not only not offended, he is delighted that he has been dissociated from "some blooming 'Arry or other" (30), and when he first speaks to the young lady with whose bicycle he has nearly collided there is "the faintest flavour of the aristocratic in his voice" (38).

21 'Arry was the cockney character created by E.J Milliken in Punch in 1877, becoming Keating points out, "a crystallization of cockney characteristics current in popular literature of the time.... 'Arry (with his girlfriend 'Arriette) provided journalists and novelists of the late seventies and eighties with an easy label for the young cockney out on the spree" (Working Classes in Victorian Fiction 140-141). In 1882 the name was used for a song which became famous in the music hall, "'Arry", which depicted a cockney dandy out to impress (William Matthews 92). The stereotype of 'Arry was still current in 1924. In The Dream, Wells has the middle class lodger, Mr Plaice, warn Harry Mortimer Smith against joining "the ranks of the half-educated proletariat" by attempting to educate himself beyond his station, when he should be working to support his mother: "I could expect such behaviour from an 'Arry, you know, but not from a Mortimer" (145).
At this point, however, Wells does introduce non-standard forms into his hero's inner speech - and feels it necessary to explain the fact: "'Orf!' said Mr Hoopdriver. 'Well, I'm blowed! Talk about Slap Up!' (His aristocratic refinement rarely adorned his speech in his private soliloquies)" (39). Nonetheless, although we have Hoopdriver, at his second meeting with the young lady measuring her speech against his - "How nicely she spoke too! nice clear-cut words! She made him feel what slush his own accent was" (60) - it is not for another nine chapters, until a third of the way through the book, in fact, that this contrast is expressed graphologically with any regularity. From Chapter 17 onward, the elision of consonants, dropped aspirates and occasional changes of vowels indicate a broad cockney accent, and Mr Hoopdriver begins to use slang expressions such as "What the juice" and "Rummy go" with increasing frequency.

Significantly, however, in The Wheels of Chance, Hoopdriver's accent varies according to the exigencies of the plot and his function in it. In the last third of the book, from the point where Hoopdriver adopts an heroic role in defending his lady against the disrespectful remarks he overhears in the inn and the reader is called upon to admire him, the traces of cockney again become less marked. The ambivalence of Wells's attitudes in this book is revealed by the fact that such passages are clearly a source of comedy, and this entails the implied snobbery of the narrator and the assumed snobbery of the reader since it takes for granted that the natural expression of a cockney draper's assistant is funny. This is not to say, of course, that non-standard speakers are never taken seriously in the novel. In Dickens's Great Expectations, for instance, Joe Gargery's speech is a source of humour, but he is at the same time perhaps the most sympathetic and admirable

22 Hoopdriver gets away with his pretence of South African origins because Jessie Milton is inexperienced and has gained her knowledge of the world from books: "His English was uncertain, but not such as books informed her distinguished the lower classes" (198). A similar situation is depicted in The History of Mr Polly where the schoolgirl, Christabel, is puzzled by Mr Polly's speech: "She sought to estimate his social status on her limited basis of experience.... And when he made a flourish and mispronounced a word, a thoughtful shade passed like the shadow of a cloud over her face" (142-3).
character in the book. But Joe speaks a rural dialect, and as I have argued, during the period that Wells was writing, the cockney accent was regarded as intrinsically inferior to all others.

The uncertainty evidenced in the depiction of the hero's speech in The Wheels of Chance is echoed in the narration. Patrick Parrinder is surely right to claim that "Wells is torn between the impulse to express Hoopdriver's experience and the impulse to disown all kinship with him" (Views 74). In parts of the novel Wells does appear to pander to the snobbery which finds cockney speech funny, but this does not mean that his attitudes are invariably as clear-cut as Parrinder suggests. Although the narrator's stance changes as the story develops, and is by no means consistently ironical, towards the end of the book, the humour at Hoopdriver's expense is at odds with the passages which indicate sympathy for his hero. At times this conflict has a marked effect on the narratorial voice, and there are a number of instances of what Mikhail Bakhtin refers to as "hidden polemic", passages where Wells's understanding of his hero's position no longer replicates but challenges the reaction he anticipates in the middle-class reader.

Bakhtin maintains that all utterances are directed towards the discourse of the other: "The word in living conversation is directly, blatantly, oriented toward a future answer-word: it provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction" (Dialogism 280). The hidden polemic is a special form of utterance, however, insofar as the discourse of the other is "treated antagonistically" and, says Bakhtin, "this antagonism, no less than the topic being discussed, is what determines the author's discourse" (Problems 195). Thus, the objections and replies of the other are anticipated and countered and "As a result, the other person's discourse begins to influence authorial discourse from within" (Problems 196). In the last chapter of The Wheels of Chance, for example, the narrator announces that there is no knowing what will happen to Hoopdriver in the future:

But if you can see how a mere counter-jumper, a cad on castors, and a fool to boot, may come to feel the little insufficiencies of
life, and if he has to any extent won your sympathies, my end is attained. (If it is not attained, may Heaven forgive us both!) (310)

In this passage - clearly ironical - which comes at the end of the book, it is the reader, not Hoopdriver, who is mocked. It is the reader's unthinking responses and easy laughter which are challenged and his own terminology which is turned against him. Phrases like "counter-jumper" and "cad on castors" do, of course, have specific referents, but they are also value-charged expressions of opprobrium since, in 1896, they were the popular comic-dismissive terms used by the middle-class for the men who served behind the counter in the retail trade. By selecting (pre-empting?) these terms, the narrator is saying to the middle-class reader, "Don't think that I am unaware of what you really feel about men like Hoopdriver" and in so doing is incorporating a hidden polemic. As Bakhtin puts it: "Such speech literally cringes in the presence or the anticipation of someone else's word, reply, objection" (196), with the result that the implications of the parenthesis - both author and reader have failed in sympathy and understanding if Hoopdriver's feelings are not appreciated - are thus undermined from within. We have been tricked into regarding Hoopdriver as a mere comic cockney stereotype, the narrator then turns the tables upon us.

The overall effect of The Wheels of Chance is, however, less coherent than its ending would suggest and the apparently unmotivated inconsistency in the depiction of Hoopdriver's speech is largely responsible for this. In the following decade Wells tackled similar subjects in The History of Mr Polly and Kipps, with more successful results. In Artie Kipps, Wells creates for the first time in his novels a hero who is unmistakably and consistently lower middle-class in his speech and this time there is no doubt where the author's sympathies lie. When he first read the book, Arnold Bennett wrote to Wells to ask "Why this immense animus against the 'nace' class of person? ....Especially as you follow Kipps about on stage with a rose-coloured lime light" (Arnold Bennett and H.G Wells 127). But, as Michael Draper has recently pointed out, it was probably necessary to focus sympathy on Kipps himself in a very positive way in order to forestall stock responses; to give a less partial depiction of such a "new man" would
have been to risk his dismissal by the reading public (H.G Wells 72).

Since the plot of Kipps derives from the hero's unexpected legacy and his subsequent rise in society, various signifiers of class are of central importance in the novel. The epigraph is taken from Manners and Rules of Good Society, by a Member of the Aristocracy, and this is one of the books Kipps studies in his search for self-improvement. The admonitions in books such as these - and there were a large number on the market in the late nineteenth century - indicate the weight contemporary society accorded to what Mrs Humphrey, the author of Manners for Men (1987), describes as "fixed rules that are in a sense permanent" (114). The style and tone of such books is uncompromising.

In unqualified declarative sentences which border on commands, the authors state: "a man always...", "his first duty is...", "the young man must/must not...", "the rule is..." and so on. Appropriately, the book of advice which Chester Coote lends Kipps is entitled Don't (177).

Much of the comedy in the book comes from Kipps's struggles to come to terms with the accepted forms of genteel behaviour, and a contemporary audience would have been more aware than the modern reader of the mistakes he makes, many of which, like the carefully thought-out decision to "mitigate" the formality of a frock-coat by wearing it with a panama hat and brown button boots, or even the choice of spoon and fork for eating the ice-bombe at the Royal Grand Hotel, were castigated by the writers of etiquette books as "unpardonable" (Manners for Men 81, 75). But most important of all was speech. For Edwardian society, the "correct" forms of speech were not only a pre-requisite for social acceptance, they possessed a moral dimension. George Sampson, for instance, writing in the 1920 s on the crucial need for improving language education states categorically: "Boys from bad homes come to school with their speech in a state of disease, and we must be unwearied in the task of purification" (xvi-vii). Even books on etiquette point to moral degeneration as a consequence of linguistic laxity. Manners for Men (1897), for instance, warns the young man not to associate with his inferiors:

After a few months his speech begins to assimilate the errors of those about him in his leisure hours. He uses the very expressions that jarred upon him at first. His dress and carriage
deteriorate, and he is well on his way downhill in life long before he realises that he has quitted his own level, probably for ever. (11)

This is the background, then, against which Wells presents a hero and heroine whose speech is clearly marked as sub-standard. *Kipps* and *The History of Mr Polly*, written a few years later, are, of all Wells's novels, the ones most concerned with the interaction of social class and language and from the beginning, the limitations of Kipps's and Polly's linguistic backgrounds are stressed. These early novels have often been compared with Dickens's treatment of similar subjects. Kipps's mother insists that he be sent to a private school, and George Garden Woodrow's Cavendish Academy for Young Gentlemen conjures up memories of Dr Blimber's Academy in *Dombey and Son* and Mr Creakle's Salem House in *David Copperfield*, but there is a significant difference. In Dickens's depiction of crammers the emphasis is on the appalling teaching methods and the bullying intimidation of the pupils, whereas Wells highlights the cultural impoverishment of such schools. One of the most significant features of Dr Woodrow's Academy is that it does nothing to enrich Kipps's linguistic development - Kipps seeks to disguise the fact, for instance, that he reads more slowly than his friend, Sid Pornick "whose education was of the inferior Elementary School brand" (23). John Batchelor comments that it is unlikely that Kipps would have left the Cavendish Academy with "unregenerate working class speech" since such schools existed "precisely to sell gentility to the lower middle-class" (52). But surely this is the point that Wells is making. The pretensions of "Academies" of this sort far outstripped their capacities. The narrator's inverted commas around such terms as "superior" and "principal" indicate the credence we should give to George Garden Woodrow's exalted claims for his school; the prospectus is in "dignified but incorrect English", Mr Woodrow's own pronunciation is shown to be inadequate - "'That's bound to fetch 'em,' Mr Woodrow had remarked when he drew up the prospectus" - and he prescribes exercises from "a 'potry' book" (40).

The Emporium does little to broaden Kipps's horizons nor does it improve his grasp of language. Its owner, Mr Shalford, is "the sort of man who is not only ignorant but absolutely incapable of English" and
the reader shares Kipps's bewilderment as his new employer expounds the mysteries of his "System" in esoteric, jargon-ridden language:

"Now, hear, f'example, I've written - see? '1 piece 1 in, cott blk elas 1 - or; what do I mean by that or - eh? d'ye know?"

Kipps promptly hadn't the least idea. (41)

Kipps's vague desire for self-improvement becomes an imperative once he acquires his legacy, and again the plot recalls Dickens. As has often been pointed out, Kipps's access to money, his love for the socially superior Helen Walsingham, and his desire to become a gentleman parallel Pip's experience and the criticism of society in Great Expectations. In Kipps, however, Wells is interested less in social practice than in the way these practices are shaped and underpinned by arbitrary signifiers of class, above all by language. Although our view of Folkestone genteel society is an external one - we see it always from Kipps's point of view - Wells indicates its parochial inadequacy in a number of ways. Mr Chester Coote, who becomes Kipps's mentor, plays a similar role to that of Herbert Pocket, but while Dickens leaves us in no doubt about Herbert's assured position as a gentleman, Coote's position is more problematic. He corrects Kipps's pronunciation of "tate-eh-tate" in favour of "tate-ah-tay" (210), for instance, and the freckled girl assures him that "contre temps" should be rendered as "contraytom" (237).

The asymmetric nature of the relationship between Kipps and Coote is emphasised through stylistic means. When, at their first encounter, Kipps acknowledges his need for Coote's help, Coote's manner becomes that of a "proprietor" (165), the forms of address change, and he speaks "with a curiously authoritative intonation" (166). As Coote pontificates about Kipps's new status, Kipps responds eagerly and noncommittally with "That's jest it" (158-166). Once Coote has been accorded the status of "a sort of lay confessor and director of Kipps" (165), their colloquies take on the form of a catechism. Kipps's contributions to the dialogue are questions about what he should do, say or wear, and the nature of Coote's replies is indicated by the verb forms: "he decided" (208), "he meditated" (208), "Coote protruded his lower lip and reflected" (244), "Coote would say 'One doesn't talk of that sort of thing'" (249) - and by the qualifiers: "said Coote with
discrimination" (209), "said Coote improvidently" (210). On the rare occasions when Kipps dares to disagree or ventures to evade his mentor's advice, "Coote's head was visible, shaking itself judicially" (208).

Kipps's linguistic inadequacy is central to the book, and this presents the author with a problem. Since Kipps is, as the narrator tells us, "only in a measure more aware of himself as a whole than is a tree" (267), his muddled thoughts and unformulated feelings are conveyed through the narrator's comments or are rendered directly, in the first person. A crucial turning point comes when his growing distaste for Helen and developing love for Ann reach their climax at the Anagram Tea. At this point we enter Kipps's mind directly, and in a passage of free indirect discourse which is all the more striking because it is so rare in this novel, we see his attitudes change. The passage expresses a sense of alienation which has been with Kipps for some time, which he would never be able to articulate:

Kipps felt dreadfully out of it with regard to all these people, and dreadfully in it with Ann. (Introduction)

He scanned the back of the big bonnet and concluded it was an extremely ugly bonnet indeed. (1) It got jerking forward as each short, dry sentence was snapped off at the end, and a plume of osprey on it jerked excessively. (2) "She hasn't guessed even one!" followed by a shriek of girlish merriment, came from the group about the tall, bold girl. (3) They'd shriek at him presently, perhaps! (4) Beyond thinking his own anagram might be Cuyps, he hadn't a notion. (5) What a chatter they were all making! (6) It was just like a summer sale! (7) Just the sort of people who'd give a lot of trouble and swap you! (8) And suddenly the smouldering fires of rebellion leapt to flame again. (9) These were a rotten lot of people, and the anagrams were rotten nonsense, and he (Kipps) had been a rotten fool to come. (10) There was Helen away there still laughing with her curate.... (11) Pity she couldn't marry him and leave him (Kipps) alone! (12) Then he would know what to do. (13) He disliked the whole gathering collectively and in detail. (14) Why were they all trying to make him one of themselves? (15) He perceived unexpected ugliness everywhere about him. (16) There were two
great pins jabbed through the tall girl's hat, and the swirls of her hair below the brim, with the minutest piece of tape tie-up showing, did not repay close examination. (17) Mrs 'Wogdelenk' wore a sort of mumps bandage of lace, and there was another lady perfectly dazzling with beads and jewels and bits of trimming. (18) They were all flaps and angles and flounces, these women. (19) Not one of them looked as neat and decent a shape as Ann's clean, trim little figure. (20) Echoes of Masterman woke up in him again. (21) Ladies indeed! (22) Here were all these chattering people, with money and with leisure, with every chance in the world, and all they could do was to crowd like this into a couple of rooms and jabber nonsense about anagrams. (23) (319-20)

The first sentence serves as an orientation to the passage as a whole, and provides an explanation of Kipps's state of mind. His brief and unexpected encounter with Ann Pornick in the hall, where he is the guest and she the parlour maid, has made him painfully aware of the social gulf between them and has intensified his ambivalence. In the passage itself the neutral comments of the narrator act as stage directions, focusing our attention on what Kipps is at that moment seeing and hearing (1)(3)(16), feeling (5)(9)(14) and remembering in response to these perceptions (21). The remainder of the passage gives us his unmediated responses, and since it is not in Kipps's nature to intellectualise his reactions, the syntax indicates the unconnected thoughts which flash across his mind. The brief, exclamatory, declarative sentences, the absence of hypotactic constructions and logical connectives show that Kipps is not in any sense thinking through what he will do - the "Then" in "Then he'd know what to do!"(14) can scarcely be considered as a serious attempt to consider cause and effect since it relies on the unlikely event of Helen abandoning him for the curate she happens to be talking to at that moment! What he is doing is reacting emotionally to what he sees and hears, and his perspective is changing by the second.

As the American sociolinguist William Labov has shown, the more emotionally involved the speaker, the more he reverts to the variety of language most natural to him (Sociolinguistic Patterns ch. 2). The sound of female shrieks and chatter recalls for Kipps the summer sale at
the drapery and he returns to the other side of the counter. Thus he reverts to the colloquial register of his Shalford days - "Just the sort of people who would give a lot of trouble and swap you!" - and the repetition of "rotten" in (10) reminds us of the limitations both of his vocabulary and of the classification processes which underly it. Fashionable society has become ugly to him, and the details are seen with the eye of a draper. He focuses with distaste on hat-pins and tapes and trimmings (17)(18)(19), which sum up for him the artificiality and external show of genteel society. At the end of the passage, Masterman's ideas, which had meant little to him at the time, come to life.

By these means Wells prepares for Kipps's rebellion and elopement. It is not a planned or thought-out rebellion and, even after his marriage to Ann, traces of his social aspirations remain - as the narrator has pointed out, "His existence was an affair of dissolving and recurring moods" (267) - but it is in the passage I have quoted that the moment of decision is reached, and Wells indicates, by stylistic means, that Kipps has recoiled intuitively from the world he has striven so hard to enter.

Many critics have objected to the intrusive narrator in Kipps, although it is conceded that the hero's inarticulacy and lack of awareness make some kind of commentary necessary. The narrator's role in the novel is, however, less straightforward than has often been suggested. The anagram tea sequence - Jamesian in its impressionism and its focus on a centre of consciousness - occurring as it does at the turning point of the novel, pre-empts the narrator, rendering him superfluous, to some extent even unreliable. It indicates that not only are there areas of Kipps's consciousness which are not accessible to anyone but Kipps himself, it suggests also that the narrator's moral vision is limited. It is, for instance, significant that although the narrator discusses a range of questions and makes a large number of social and moral judgements throughout the book, the motives behind the Cootes' and Walsingham's acceptance of Kipps are never touched on. It is only in this passage that Kipps himself - the last person one would expect to analyse the situation - raises this central question: "Why were they all trying to make him one of themselves?"
Five years after *Kipps*, Wells created a very different lower-middle-class hero in *The History of Mr Polly*. Mr Polly's speech exhibits the same general cockney features. He is, however, not only more intelligent and more assertive than Kipps, he also has a genuine love of language, therefore his response to feelings of linguistic inadequacy is very different. What Mr Polly refers to as his "upside down way of talking" (372) is in fact a compound of his fascination with words and his aspiration towards a fuller life. Unlike Kipps, he makes no attempt to adapt to particular social usages, nor does he amend his speech to conform to middle-class pronunciation. His invented language is in part defensive, but more importantly it reflects his urge to reach out beyond the boundaries of his inadequate idiolect. From the beginning the accepted forms fail him. The narrator comments on the waste of potential ability involved in an education system that seems to promise its pupils so much and gives them so little, because it is only "outside the regions devastated by the school curriculum" (20) that Polly's natural intelligence and imagination is able to develop. His English teaching had left him unsure of the spelling and pronunciation of most words and, says the narrator, "that especially was a pity, because words attracted him and under happier conditions he might have used them well" (19). Mr Polly does, however, find a solution:

New words had terror and fascination for him; he did not acquire them, he could not avoid them, and so he plunged into them. His only solution was not to be misled by the spelling. That was no guide anyhow. He avoided every recognised phrase in the language and mispronounced everything in order that he shouldn't be suspected of ignorance but whim. (40)

In general Mr Polly's neologisms are not challenged and it is a comment on the linguistic grasp of so many of the presumably better-educated people he encounters that he is not suspected of ignorance; thus the reader is able to enjoy Polly's fecundity of language without being disturbed by the fear of ridicule - we enjoy the fact that he gets away with it because from the beginning of the book Wells has ensured that we are on his side against the system which has constrained him. Only once, in fact, is his speech corrected by the standard. This occurs in the magistrates' court when he asserts that his friend Parsons was
"naturally of a choleraic disposition" (56), and the smile of enjoyment on the face of one of the magistrates (the one he has already designated "'the Grave and Reverend Signor with the palatial Boko'") suggests to Polly that "the word was not so good as he had thought it" (57). Even here, the other members of the bench - whose speech is shown to be markedly less "educated" than that of Polly himself - are merely puzzled by a term they do not understand, and he is urged to clarify his statement.

The central idea of the plot, breaking free of the constraints of social custom, which reaches its climax with Mr Polly's realisation that "If the world does not please you, you can change it" (283), is replicated in the structure of the text - we are invited to respond on two different levels. On a number of occasions, the narrator points the reader towards the wider social significance of Mr Polly's experiences - the ill-paid insecurity of life as a draper's assistant, the struggles and anxieties of a small-shopkeeper and so on - and purports to quote from "a certain high-browed, spectacled gentleman living at Highbury, wearing a pince-nez and writing for the most part in the beautiful library of the Climax Club" (75) who has analysed Mr Polly as part of a general social problem, but set against this is the sense of liberation given us by Mr Polly's individuality, exemplified most strikingly in his audacity with language. He overcomes his lack of conventional vocabulary by drawing on his omniverous reading which gives him a wide range of analogies. He assures a fellow shopkeeper in Fishbourne, for instance, that they need not fear a German invasion because the Kaiser is "not the Xerxiacious sort" (233), and he warns the plump woman not to expect too much of him because he is "not one of your Herculaceous sort...Nothing very wonderful bicepitally" (310).

Mr Polly's problems arise partly from this poetic aspect of his nature - "such a man," comments the narrator wryly, "is not likely to make a great success under modern business conditions" (66) - and partly from the constrictions of his lower-middle class position which bar him from the romance he craves and throw him into contact with the Larkin family. Wells indicates through the dialect transcriptions that Polly's speech is nearer the standard than that of the Larkins - significantly, in the scene in which he finds he has proposed to Miriam, and when they
discuss the advantages of owning a shop: "'It's a 'ome,' said Miriam."
Polly replies, "'It's a home.'" The omission of one aspirate is enough
to suggest Polly's awareness of difference between himself and the
Larkins; in his brief romantic encounter with Christabel - which in
Polly's more exalted declarations takes on many of the qualities of "fyn
amour" or courtly love - he tells her his name is Polly and she comments
that it is a girl's name: "For a moment he went out of tune. 'I wish I
was,' he said, and could have bitten out his tongue at the Larkins sound
of it" (141). Unlike most of Wells's cockney characters, Mr Polly has
an ear for linguistic nuances. He revels in the qualities of the
American speech he overhears at Canterbury, for instance, and reproduces
its vowel sounds accurately, and he has an equally good ear for
register; he "translated his longing for joy and leisure into Harold
Johnsonese by saying that he wanted to look about him for a bit before
-going into another situation" (118-19).

In the Atlantic Edition of his work Wells paired The History of Mr
Polly with Bealby, written a few years later. In the preface to this
volume, he claims that he considers the two stories to be of very
unequal value. Although he disagrees with the critics who maintain that
The History of Mr Polly is the author's best book, he does feel "it is
his happiest book and the one he cares for most" (Preface to Volume
XVII), whilst Bealby, written just before the First World War, "betrays
a writer intensely irritated by his world" (Preface). The two stories
have obvious affinities. Both books are about breaking out of the
constraints imposed on a lowly member of a class society and both
explore the liberating effects of linguistic diversity.

The eponymous hero of Bealby is a young cockney lad who has been
brought to live in the country by his mother, recently married to the
gardener of a great estate. He runs away from the post his parents have
selected for him as steward's room boy at the house. Eventually he
returns and accepts his role, but in the course of his adventures his
whole view of the world is challenged and to some extent changed by his
meeting with a tramp, whose language creates a world which Bealby finds
strange and dreadful, but also alluring. The esoteric vocabulary is in
itself a mystery:

The tramp used strange terms. He spoke of the "deputy" and the
"doss-house," of the "spike" and "padding the hoof," of "screevers" and "tarts" and "copper's narks." To these words Bealby attached such meanings as he could, and so the things of which the tramp talked floated unsurely into his mind and again and again he had to readjust and revise his interpretations. (228)

The tramp redefines concepts that Bealby had thought himself quite clear about; "'Stealing! What you call stealing, matey, I call restitution" (244). Not surprisingly, Bealby finds that the phrases with which he attempts to describe his own adventures "seemed suddenly thin and anaemic to his ears" (230).

Although the tramp's anarchic values do not prevail, and the hero returns meekly to the future his family have mapped out for him, Bealby shows that discourse which is, in terms of social convention, substandard and despised can nonetheless be in itself liberating and challenging. The tramp is in his way an artist, a creator of a new reality. In the same way, throughout Mr. Polly, the hero is an "insubordinate" (64) and "uncontrollable phrasemaker" (65) and this is seen to be threatening by the petit-bourgeois establishment but is at the same time evidence of his artistry with language. His distaste for the "smug monuments" (68) in Canterbury Cathedral, for instance, is summed up in the phrases "metrorious urnfuls" and "dejected angelosity" (69) which do create a new reality obliging the reader to draw on existing linguistic knowledge to produce a new whole. The technique is to draw on different paradigmatic sets. "Metrorious" combines the connotations of "meritorious" and "meretricious" to create a new and highly suggestive acoustic image which exactly conveys Mr. Polly's reaction, whilst "dejected angelosity" is truly "inside out" because two possible conventional phrases - "dejected angels" and "angelic dejection" - contribute to the creation of a new noun which retains the rhythms of the adjective, thus inverting the head and modifier of the nominal group to produce a striking new image. Not that this explanation exhausts the polysemy of this phrase; it could be suggested, for instance, that the ending of "angelosity" has a pejorative ring to it, possibly because of its resemblance to "religiosity". Similarly, Polly's description of Parson's ecstatic rendering of Carlyle in the
warehouse - "Doing the High Froth. Spuming! Windmilling!" - as "Sesquippedan verboojuice" and "Eloquent Rapsodooce" (40) shows Wells extending the boundaries of language, within the limitations of a realist novel, in an almost Joycean manner. But while the artist in Wells clearly enjoyed exploring these possibilities, as a writer with a social conscience he felt strongly that too much linguistic experimentation would negate what he saw as the social purpose of literature (this issue is discussed in detail in Chapter Five). Thus, Wells's later fiction is experimental in a number of ways, but it contains far fewer instances of linguistic deviation.

In his rejection of linguistic innovation, Wells is, in fact, conforming to centripetal forces of language, the pull towards a unitary and centralised form, which operates always in opposition to the centrifugal forces of "heteroglossia" - the dynamic realities (and possibilities) of all the variations and stratifications of language. Unitary language exists only in theory but, as Bakhtin claims, "it makes its real presence felt as a force for overcoming this heteroglossia, imposing specific limits to it, guaranteeing a certain maximum of understanding and crystalizing into a real, although still relative unity" (Dialogic 270).

The issue of language in relation to social class, therefore, highlights another dimension of the tension between Wells the artist, Wells the scientist and Wells the Utopian socialist discussed in the last chapter. Although in his early fiction Wells clearly enjoys linguistic diversity and often makes it a source of humour, he is at the same time anxious to show the injustice and divisiveness of a social system which categorises and condemns people who do not conform to middle-class language patterns. The early novels do not present any answers to this problem. After a brief escape, Bealby returns to the

23 This aspect of Wells has been commented on by a number of critics, and it has led to a variety of conclusions. John Batchelor sees it as the source of the dualism which he believes to be at the heart of Wells's work; Michael Draper argues that the tension between the artist and the scientist in Wells led to a conflict which produced his best work; Vincent Brome centres his critical biography of Wells on the artist/scientist dichotomy (See particularly 101-110).
niche to which his birth has condemned him and although both Polly and Kipps break out and achieve happiness, for each it is an "individual solution". Kipps's whole career has been based on an extraordinary sequence of chances, in themselves a reflection of – and comment on – an anarchic, unplanned society, and his final secure contentment depends on the proceeds from what remains of his legacy plus the income from an unplanned investment. In the same way, although Mr Polly's eventual happiness is the result of choice, his choice is to opt out of the system rather than to fight it or reform it, and the final section of the book is couched appropriately in terms of a romantic rural idyll. Neither book offers a solution to the problems of class. At that period, however, Wells was looking forward to the establishment of a society in which such class indicators would cease to matter. As A Modern Utopia makes clear, linguistic diversity is an inevitable consequence of a living language, and the language of Utopia will "still be a living tongue, an animated system of imperfections which every individual man will infinitesimally modify", but it will at the same time be "one and indivisible" (15) because false value judgements based on social class will no longer be part of the social structure.

In Wells's later fiction there are only two novels in which non-standard speech is used extensively, The Dream (1924) and You Can't be too Careful (1941), and both books indicate a considerable change in his approach to the issue. By the time he came to write The Dream, Wells had for some years been devoting most of his energies to promoting a world in which class divisions and the speech forms which indicate and help sustain them would become a thing of the past. Significantly, cockney speech in this novel is used primarily to illustrate the constraints of a class society which the enterprising individual must oppose and overcome. The story recounts the life of Harry Mortimer Smith, who grows up in a lower-middle-class family, first on the Sussex coast and then in London during the last years of the nineteenth century. The representation of the family's speech is the form of cockney Wells devised for the early fiction, but the perspective of the book is very different, partly because to the narrator, Sarnac, and his listeners the limitations of this dialect of two thousand years before are self-evident. Their stupefaction and inability to believe that any
society could permit let alone perpetuate such absurd divisions provide a running commentary. In marked contrast to the Edwardian novels, where dialect forms are a part of group solidarity and the separations and difficulties involved in social mobility are stressed, there is an implication in *The Dream* that it is up to the individual to change his speech if he wants to surmount the limitations it imposes. Harry is well aware of the problem from the outset. Sarnac recounts:

"I learnt to speak from my family and chiefly from my mother. None of us spoke well; our common idioms were poor and bad, we mispronounced many words and long words we avoided as something dangerous and pretentious." (30)

Harry's sister Fanny who has been humiliated because of her accent scolds the little boy for dropping his aspirates and using non-standard vowels: "'Harry,' she said, 'if you call me Fenny again it's war and pinching. My name's Fanny and your's is Harry and don't you forget it. It's not English we talk in this place; it's mud'" (80). Harry, speculating on what has upset her, concludes that, whatever the immediate cause: "Fanny was setting out now to talk good English and make me do the same, with a fury all her own" (80). Thus, at the age of nine or ten Harry makes a conscious effort to change his speech and presumably achieves this with a minimum of effort since there is no indication of an accent after the move to Pimlico.

The reader is called on to admire both Fanny and Harry who are aware of their lack of education and are determined to find some way of getting on in the world. This is made clear in the extra-narrative commentary of Sarnac and his friends in which the values of their predecessors' socially stratified society are roundly castigated. Fanny runs away from home to live with a wealthy married man, eventually achieving happiness and security. Harry makes a determined effort to educate himself through evening classes, becomes a successful business man, is elected to a good club, even considers entering politics. For all these activities, the importance of conforming to acceptable language use is stressed. Harry recalls, for instance, that he "developed a gift for talk" and discovered "a gift for caustic commentary that gained [him] some reputation as a wit" (274). The other members of the family, however, who are presented as less
intelligent and less aware, are prepared to accept the limitations of their lot, and significantly, they continue to speak cockney.

Wells's apparent change of attitude towards cockney usage in the decade intervening between The History of Mr Polly and The Dream must be understood in relation to his experience as a novelist and social theorist and the linguistic prejudices of the society for which he was writing. In the 1920's and '30's Wells's energies were directed more and more towards promoting the idea of world government and, as I argued in Chapters One and Two, his interest in language as a system of signification and means of international communication was an essential part of that wider project. At the same time he was very much aware of the denigration of cockney in English society - Fanny's use of the metaphor "mud" is revealing, with its connotations of baseness and being trampled underfoot (The Dream 80).24 In many respects attitudes towards "sub-standard" language had changed little since the 1890s. In 1934, the midpoint of Wells's most active decade as a polemicist, H.C Wyld wrote a paper for the Society for Pure English, in which he claimed that not only was "Received Standard English" intrinsically better than any other variety, any form of deviation from RSE was "distressing" for the listener, and had the effect of distracting attention from what was being said. He recalls an instance of this:

Some time ago I listened in to a speaker, a noble lord, I regret to say, broadcasting his belief that there was still a "stight of dinejer" in the political atmosphere of Europe - or else there was

24 The extraordinary vehemence with which non-standard forms of speech were castigated (in moral terms) at this period is illustrated in the Newbolt Report On the Teaching of English which appeared in 1921, three years before Wells published The Dream. It is clear that the Report was based on the assumption of a social hierarchy of language varieties and the Newbolt committee stated: "...it is emphatically the business of the Elementary School to teach all its pupils who speak a definite dialect or whose speech is disfigured by vulgarisms, to speak standard English..." (65). The Report also laid great stress on the difficulties encountered by teachers in these schools who "have to fight against the powerful influences of evil habits of speech contracted in home and street. The teachers' struggle is thus not with ignorance but with a perverted power" (65). In contrast, RP is described as "pure pronunciation" (137).
not - I am not sure which, for my attention was diverted from following his argument by the interest excited by his cockney accent. (606)

Clearly, anyone who wished to gain a hearing in such a society must avoid all such irrelevant "distractions".

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that in Wells's later fiction the cockney dialect is seen as a handicap which can and must be overcome, not because it is intrinsically inferior to other varieties (as the framing story in The Dream makes clear, all such distinctions are absurd) but because it prohibits its speakers - the lower-middle and working classes - from being effective in the world. The characters who do nothing to educate themselves - and changing their speech is seen an essential part of this process - are the ones who are suppressed and easily manipulated because they are prepared to accept the status quo. The Dream does not advocate "gentrification" for reasons of snobbery, nor even for personal advancement, but because that is the only way someone like Harry Mortimer-Smith will be able to make any contribution to the world. By the end of the novel, he is likely to become a director of a publishing house which has educational importance and is involved in politics. Because he has escaped from what he calls the "mental extinction" imposed by "practical illiteracy" (143-4) he has achieved a position where he is able to advance the status of others.

In contrast, the hero of Wells's last novel, You Never Can Tell, sees no reason to make any such changes: "His disposition was to do nothing of any sort anywhere until he was told. Quite time enough then" (64). Edward Albert Tewler is represented as a specimen of contemporary man, which for Wells means that he is the product of a feudal civilization that has denied him both education and opportunity for growth; a man who believes he is acting on the world whilst "the reality was that the world was doing things to him. All he did, from first to last was to react to it" (9). Thus in this book, Tewler's unchanging cockney speech is an indicator of his general lack of resourcefulness and is of a piece with his opposition to all "ideers" as useless and dangerous. This novel was published in 1941, when for twenty years Wells had been warning his fellow-countrymen that the choice was education or catastrophe. Homo Tewler had not listened, had believed
that everything would go on as it always had, had not recognised what Wells believed to be the truth: "No one can escape the common fate that awaits our species as a whole, but so far few of us apprehend as much, and still fewer have roused themselves to do anything about it" (222). Hence the note of exasperation in this book with its hero's unregenerate cockney speech, a mark of his inertia and apathy. It is significant that as time goes on "A certain slovenliness of accent that had characterised Edward Albert's English became rather more apparent" (218).

Throughout his fiction, then, Wells points to the evils of a class society, and even in this last novel, which presents a scathing attack on Homo Tewler, he concedes that Edward Albert is what his society has made him and is thus "not so much detestable as pitiful" (285). Nonetheless, in the later work the emphasis has changed. By this stage in his career, Wells's fascination with the "centrifugal" forces of language, the linguistic diversity which gives such vitality to the speech of Mr Polly and the Tramp in Bealby, has given way to a pragmatic preference for the "centripetal" forces which work towards a unitary "correct language". This is because, paradoxically, this is the only means by which an ideal society can be achieved - a society where linguistic diversity can be enjoyed and celebrated since it is no longer a source of social separation. Not that such a paradox is out of keeping with Wells's thinking in general. As early as 1902 he was extolling the constructive type of mind which "thinks constantly and by preference things to come" and "gives value to this or that, entirely in relation to things designed or foreseen" (The Discovery of the Future 19). Thus, linguistic indicators of social class, particularly the depiction of speech, play a substantial part in Wells's fiction, and can be linked with his general attitudes towards the structure of English society and the individual's part in it. His knowledge of the theoretical aspects of language gave him the impetus to experiment with a variety of linguistic and literary conventions and his own upbringing together with his particular place in the social hierarchy gave him the ability to render lower-middle-class cockney speech forms in a particularly convincing way.

P.N Furbank accuses both H.G Wells and Arnold Bennett of being
incapable of writing about working-class or lower-middle-class characters "with any freedom or unselfconsciousness" and contrasts Joyce's and Lawrence's depiction of lower-class characters - "it was almost a measure of their genius that for [them] this class problem was no longer a problem - that it dissolved at their touch" - with their predecessors' "patronising glorification of the 'little man'" (26). But it is central to Wells's thinking that the constraints and limitations of living in a class society constitute a crippling limitation for the majority of his fellow-citizens, and his sympathetic approach to his lower-middle-class characters can only be considered patronising if one fails to notice the way in which, in both early and late novels, the ironic tone of the narration challenges and subverts middle-class prejudices. Admittedly there is something degrading about the idea of attempting to alter one's speech to conform to the demands of society, but the problem does not cease to exist because one ignores it. Wells does not, in his early fiction, put the blame on the Hoopdrivers or Kippses. They are the victims of a social system which registers and places people through fine and arbitrary linguistic gradations, a system which encourages people to imitate their superiors' language, then mocks them for it. In the later books, too, although he has become increasingly impatient with what he sees as inertia, Wells's animus is still directed primarily against the system.
Chapter 4

Wells, Language and Psychoanalysis

a) The Split Self
In the Chapters One and Two I argued that Wells was, throughout his life, interested in the nature, function and power of language because he saw it as constitutive of the "artificial factor" which had made human civilization and culture possible. In this chapter I shall discuss the ways in which Wells's interest in psychoanalysis interacted with his notions about personality, and influenced the language and structure of his fiction. The central role of language in the construction of the human subject has been discussed extensively in recent years. Julia Kristeva claims: "As a signifying system in which the speaking subject makes and unmakes himself, language is at the centre of psychological and more particularly psychoanalytic studies" (Language: the Unknown 265) and post-structuralist ideas about language have called into question the whole concept of the human "subject". It has even been suggested that the traditional realist depiction of characters as real people, as solid figures having "full presence" is no more than a bourgeois illusion. Frederic Jameson, for instance, claims that post-modernist fiction has made this clear:

Not only is the bourgeois individual subject a thing of the past, it is also a myth: it never really existed in the first place; there have never been autonomous subjects of that type. Rather this construct is merely a philosophical and cultural mystification, which sought to persuade people that they "had" individual subjects and possessed this unique personal identity. (Foster 115)

Wells's novels do, of course, appear to conform to this "myth".

1 Freudian and semiotic theories have been brought together in the work of Jaques Lacan, and Julia Kristeva has taken Lacanian ideas as a basis for a consideration of the gendered subject. Frederic Jameson gives a Marxist re-reading of subjectivity, bringing together psychoanalytic, structuralist and post-structuralist concepts. In Problems in General Linguistics, Emile Benveniste discusses the grammatical construction of the subject, and suggests ways in which Freudian ideas can be explored in terms of linguistics.
He had no doubt that it was his responsibility as a novelist to depict his characters as "realistically" as possible, and in 1940 he wrote:

At the present time a profounder change in human thought and human outlook is going on than has ever occurred before. The great literary tradition I follow demands that this be rendered in terms of living human beings. It must be shown in both word and act....So far as my observation and artistry as a novelist has enabled me to achieve it, there is not a single individual in this book that you may not meet and recognise in the street. (Babes in the Darkling Wood 8-9)

I shall argue, however, that Wells's later novels, particularly those of the 'twenties and 'thirties indicate that he, like the modernist writers, was influenced by psychoanalytic ideas in his depiction of character - although this may not have been part of his conscious intention. I shall discuss Wells's notion of the split self in relation to his treatment of the language of dreams and his changing attitudes towards the unconscious, and suggest that the tension which existed between his enthusiasm for psychoanalytic theory and his resistance to certain aspects of it had an effect on the language of his fiction. Recent developments in narratology and linguistic criticism provide ways of analysing the language and narrative techniques of these novels which reveal that, in various ways, without abandoning the codes and conventions of formal realism, their texts subvert what D.H Lawrence called "the old stable ego of the character" (Selected

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2 One early critic certainly thought that Wells was knowingly incorporating psychoanalytic ideas in his fiction. In 1917, an American writer, Wilfred Lay, published an article, "The Marriage Ideas of H.G Wells," which begins with the assertion that just as William James had been described as a psychologist who wrote like a novelist, and Henry James as a novelist who wrote like a psychologist, Wells, "though lacking therein nothing of charm and artistry, writes like a psychoanalyst" (Bookman July 1917, 606).

3 "Formal realism" is the term used by Ian Watt in The Rise of the Novel and it is useful phrase because it draws attention to the fact that realism is fundamentally a question of form and language. I take it as referring to the same textual features as Barthes's term, "classic realism," used in S/Z to denote the lisible text.
Despite his emphasis on verisimilitude in the depiction of fictional characters, Wells did not subscribe to the traditional view of the human personality as stable or possessed of an essential core. The thesis which Wells wrote in 1942, as part of his submission for a London University doctorate and published in '42-'44, rejects traditional notions of a fixed personal identity - an abridged version was, in fact, published under the title: "The Illusion of Personality". The conclusions of this paper are very similar to those of postmodernism, although the evidence on which they are based is very different. Wells draws on psychological - particularly psychoanalytic - theories, together with anthropology and sociology, to support his thesis, but his perspective is above all that of a biologist: "It is the body that holds the mind together and not the mind the body" (171).5 His premise is that there is no such thing as an independent personality: "the integrality of the individual in the higher metazoa up to and including man, is a biologically convenient delusion" (169). The main thrust of the paper, therefore, is to justify the term "delusion" and to explain why this delusion has been "biologically convenient" (171).

The conception of self, then, is a delusion because, as a consequence of evolutionary development the human being, unlike the lower animals, has acquired a brain which functions as a "storage organ," an organ which can record stimuli favourably or unfavourably.


5 Although Wells does not mention William James explicitly in the thesis (except for a footnote referring to Varieties of Religious Experience, 195 n.13), his arguments in its opening sections are closely related to those of Chapter 10, "The Consciousness of Self" in The Principles of Psychology. Like James, Wells always bases his psychological insights firmly on biology.
can refer back to previous experience, can then make decisions in
relation to previous experience and so on. Self-consciousness in human-
beings, therefore, is a concomitant of a purely physiological capacity
for recording and recalling stimuli, and, says Wells, because "Self-
consciousness and a conception of other individuals as consistent
persons are necessary to social behaviour" - and homo sapiens has
evolved as a species which needs to co-operate in order to survive:

The self-conscious human organism, *whatever it does and however
much it does it*, will ascribe its behaviour as an individual to
Self, and whatever stimulus may turn its mind to another phase of
behaviour it will succumb to the delusion that it is the same
Self, still in continuous operation. (170)

Wells introduces a notional "John Smith" who is not one but potentially
five million John Smiths, all of whom believe themselves to be one
person because they are all "aboard the same body" and "built around a
similar conception" of John Smith. Nonetheless, Wells claims, this
conception of unity is a delusion because "*in fact they are a collection
of mutually replaceable individual systems held together in a common
habitation. One ascends: another fades before it*" (171).

The remainder of the thesis argues that the delusion of
personality is biologically convenient because the concept of self-hood
- an essential prerequisite for the recognition of self-hood in others -
has been an indispensable factor in promoting gregariousness and
overcoming heterogeneity in homo-sapiens, although, Wells claims, "the
realization of the social and political significance of gregariousness
has been a slow process" (183)

Whatever the limitations of the paper as a scientific thesis, its
central argument cannot be dismissed as unimportant because it is an
instance of the consistency of Wells's thinking on an issue of
considerable significance to his work as an imaginative writer. The
conclusions of the thesis are a logical extension of ideas first
explored in the scientific articles of the 1890's which were discussed
in Chapter One. In both these early papers and the thesis, written over
forty years later, there is an emphasis on the ways in which the
"delusion" of individuality and an integrated personality is a social,
and - after the growth of language - a linguistic construct. Thus, in
the later sections of the thesis, the individual human-being's entry into what Jacques Lacan calls the symbolic order is equated with the acquisition of language by mankind. Wells makes a comparison between the individual and the group and argues that the minds of homo-sapiens are shaped in the same way as the "ancient mental distinctions" of each human community have been modified and shaped "as its range of intercourse widened through the ages" (182-3). Throughout Wells's writing, therefore, there is evidence of a keen interest in the ways in which language constructs the subject, and in his fiction there is an emphasis on the interaction between biological and socio-historical — that is, linguistically — determined factors in the shaping of behaviour.

This concern is at the root of Wells's fascination with psychology. His early scientific training, together with his interest in social theory, promoted an interest in the then rapidly developing science of psychology, an interest which seems to have begun in the 1890s and which was to continue throughout his life. During the 1920s, the work of Freud, Adler and Jung was becoming more widely available in English translation and it is clear that Wells became fascinated by psychoanalytic theory. In *The Science of Life*, he describes this new approach enthusiastically, as "A very fertilizing stream of influence upon psychology which rose to its maximum twelve or fifteen years ago" (794). What Wells particularly likes about psychoanalysis is that it is "dynamic"; this is because it "thinks in terms of activities and strivings, of impulses and conflicts, in the place of the flat and lifeless picture of mental states" (814). Thus, the new theories are consonant with William James's rejection of the prevailing view of mental activity as made up of discrete fragments, "separate independent parts" in favour of a dynamic model.6 Another aspect of psychoanalytic theory which Wells draws attention to in this account is its new and illuminating emphasis on the unconscious mental

6 "Consciousness," James writes, in a much-quoted passage, "is nothing jointed; it flows. A 'river' or a 'stream' are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. In talking of it hereafter, let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life" (*Principles of Psychology* 239).
processes. It is a measure of Wells's interest that although the section headed "psychoanalysis" in Book Eight of The Science of Life is accorded only three pages, psychoanalytic ideas on such subjects as hypnosis and the unconscious dominate the section on human behaviour and the human mind.

b) Language, Jung and the 'Persona'

Wells's most direct contact with contemporary work in the new science was his acquaintance with the Swiss psychoanalyst, Carl Gustav Jung. The two men first met in the summer of 1924, when Jung visited England to give a lecture. They spent an evening together - their conversation is recorded in The World of William Clissold (Bk I: 13) - and Wells visited Jung at his home in Zurich in July of that year. In the Clissold passage it is evident that he saw Jung's theory of the collective unconscious as analogous to the idea of the Mind of the Race - "a sort of supermind of the species," which Wells had first propounded in Boon in 1915 - and, records Clissold, "the great man...said that it was entirely sympathetic with his views" (92).

Despite the reservations each felt about the work of the other, the two men continued to correspond and to meet occasionally over the next fifteen years and there seems no doubt that Wells was influenced by many of Jung's ideas. Book Eight of The Science of Life speaks highly of the contribution the theories of Freud, Adler and Jung have made to our knowledge of truth, and although Wells awards his highest accolade to the founder of psychoanalysis - "Sigmund Freud's name is as cardinal in the history of human thought as Charles Darwin's" (814) - it is Jung's account of the unconscious which is given pride of place: "Jung has attempted to do fuller justice to the complexity of the mind than

7 Jung's response when Wells had sent him a copy of the novel, indicates that Clissold's account is accurate. Jung writes: "It was indeed a great surprise to me that you remembered so well what we were talking about" (Letter dated September 11th, 1926, Wells Archive).

8 Vincent Brome, who has written biographies of both Wells and Jung, provides an account of their relationship in Jung: Man and Myth.
either of his rivals" (813). Chapter Eight, "Modern Ideas of Conduct," is concerned with man's attempt to adapt himself to his "continually more complex and penetrating social existence" (828), and this entire section is, as Wells acknowledges, based on Jung's Two Essays (828). Although the differences between Jung's and Wells's thinking became more marked as, over the years, the psychologist became more mystical in his approach to the human psyche, and the writer distanced himself further from his brief religious phase, this does not stop Wells appropriating some of Jung's "convenient new forms of expression" (828), and he makes extensive use of Jungian terminology both in his fiction and non-fiction from this time onward. It is clear, however, as Michael Draper points out, in his article "Wells, Jung and the Persona," that Wells adapts and to some extent redefines Jung's terms to fit his own purposes. What is interesting, therefore, is not so much Wells's attachment to certain words as the ways in which he changes their meaning, because these changes throw light on his ideas about personality and on his depiction of character.

The Jungian term which Wells uses most often is "persona". This word, originally denoting the mask worn by an actor in the classical theatre, was considered by Jung to be appropriate for describing the personality adopted by each human-being in his or her dealings with the world (7: 155, 276). In The Science of Life, Wells offers a brief but comprehensive summary of Jungian theory and he cites Jung's view that the persona derives from the individual's attempt to separate him or herself from "the sphere of the collective psyche" (7: 147). Thus, says Wells, we are always thrusting down disturbing "incompatible impulses, desires and cravings out of sight, out of our ego into the Unconscious," where "they become like a dark shadow of the persona, they are everything it is not; they are, as it were, in necessary conflict with the persona for the ego" (828). He quotes Jung's term, anima, for this "suppressed and insurgent underself in the unconscious" (828) and points

9 These essays, revised in 1942, are published in The Collected Works of C.G Jung, vol. 7 under the titles: "The Psychology of the Unconscious" and "The Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious".
out that although in Jung's view the anima is not necessarily bad and the persona good, the anima is always less lucid, more closely linked with emotion and blind feeling. Both persona and anima may develop internal inconsistencies - the persona may be changed in an attempt to rationalize the impulses which rise up from the anima - and most mental disturbances "are conflicts of the persona with the anima" (829).

Nonetheless, even in this passage, which acknowledges that the persona has its less favourable aspects, its "shadow-side" of which the individual is unaware, it is clear that Wells's definition is not the one presented in Two Essays. Although Jung concedes that the persona is "an unavoidable necessity" (7: 191) if human-beings are to accommodate themselves to the world, for him it is never any more than "a compromise role in which we parade before the community" (7: 156). For Jung the ideal - attainable only in maturity, which usually means middle-life - is to achieve "Individuation", a state in which both conscious and unconscious elements of the persona are transcended: "The aim of individuation is nothing less than to divest the self of the false wrappings of the persona on the one hand, and the suggestive power of primordial images on the other" (7: 172). Wells, on the other hand, possibly because he could not accept the notion of a unified self, ignores this idea altogether and defines the persona in The Science of Life - in a far more favourable way than Jung ever does - as "the self we want and do our best to imagine ourselves to be" (828). This definition of the persona, in fact, probably owes at least as much to William James's categorisation of the social self in The Principles of Psychology as it does to Jung. In his copy of James, Wells has marked in the margin the passage which asserts: "the emotion that beckons me on is indubitably the pursuit of an ideal social self... This self is the true, the intimate, the ultimate permanent Me which I seek" (1: 315-16).

10 My interpretation of Jung's use of terms is drawn from a range of his writing, particularly vols. 7 and 13 of the Collected Works. The major problem in attempting to define terms as Jung uses them is not that he does not offer definitions but that he offers so many. In the Two Essays alone he comes back again and again to the concepts of the persona, the anima, the shadow and the self, and defines them in slightly different ways. Anthony Storr, comments on "the obscurity and confusion" of Jung's later writing (Jung 36).
The first chapter of *Experiment in Autobiography*, written three years later, offers an even more positive interpretation. Here Wells begins by giving an account of himself as a man whose main aim has been to disentangle himself from the demands of "individual immediacies" (17) in order to devote himself wholly to his work, to what he sees as his (as yet undefined) "particular business" (19). The second section of this opening chapter, written, he tells us, a year later, declares that the earlier passage had been a sincere if artless attempt to define what Jung would call his "persona": "A persona, as Jung uses the word," he explains, "is the private conception a man has of himself, his idea of what he wants to be and of how he wants other people to take him" (24). Wells acknowledges that this private conception may be a very inaccurate picture for a variety of reasons: the persona may be multiple, it changes and adapts, above all, it rarely encompasses the whole even of a person's conscious being:

So that this presentation of a preoccupied mind devoted to an exalted and spacious task and seeking a maximum of detachment from the cares of this world and from baser needs and urgencies that distract it from that task, is not even the beginning of a statement of what I am, but only of what I most like to think I am. It is the plan to which I work, by which I prefer to work, and by which ultimately I want to judge my performance. But quite a lot of other things have happened to me, quite a lot of other stuff goes with me and it is not for the reader to accept this purely personal criterion. (25)

The persona may, therefore, be wholly false and in its extreme form may comprise the delusions of a madman, but, argues Wells in contradiction to Jung, it need not always be a product of self-deception. He cites Max Beerbohm's story in support of his contention that the persona can come to be the reality: "The mask, the persona, of the Happy Hypocrite became at last his true face" (25), and goes on to argue that there are, in any case, abundant grounds for claiming that his own persona - although, like that of all other human beings, a construct - is not far removed from objective reality: "My persona may be an exaggeration of one aspect of my being, but I believe it is a ruling aspect. It may be a magnification, but it is not a fantasy. A
voluminous mass of work accomplished attests its reality" (26).11

This is, it must be admitted, an undeniably circular argument since Wells advances his work as confirmatory evidence for what he most wants to believe - that his working self is his true persona. For the rest of his career, Wells used "persona" to signify this aspect of the personality, in the thesis he writes: "It was Jung who first styled this wabbling working self we imagine for ourselves the 'persona' - and it remains the best word for it" (172). The reinterpretations and omissions which characterise Wells's use of the term relate, too, to his hopes for human advance. As a number of critics have pointed out, Wells always puts considerable emphasis on the importance of "will",12 the conscious striving without which such advances would be impossible. Not surprisingly, the unconscious, "shadow-side" of the persona which Jung insists on, is increasingly discounted.

A similar process of reinterpretation is observable in relation to Jung's concept of the inflation of the persona. Jung argued that the personal unconscious overlays the much deeper level of the collective unconscious, which contains the archetypes - "the residues of ancestral life" (7: 76, 154). Inflation of the persona occurs when the individual makes contact with these deeper levels, and this may lead to unpleasant and unforeseen consequences: "without noticing it the conscious personality is pushed about like a figure on a chess-board by an invisible player" (7: 159). The alluring but dangerous powers of the collective unconscious exert "a strange irresistible attraction".

11 This assertion is in direct opposition to Jung's claim in "The Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious" that although it is essential to achieve a compromise between the expectations of society and "the true nature of the individual" (7: 190) - and "people really do exist who believe they are what they pretend to be" - this can never be a psychologically desirable state of affairs because it entails "a formidable concession to the external world, a genuine self-sacrifice....for under no circumstances will the unconscious tolerate this shifting of the centre of gravity" (7: 191).

12 John Reed devotes a large section of his book to Wells's treatment of "The Will", which he sees as one of the most important of the recurrent ideas which characterise Wells's thinking.
(7: 159) - he uses words like "confusing" and "blinding" (7: 158) - so that the personality is "puffed up" beyond its individual limits and "in such a state a man fills a space which normally he cannot fill" (7: 140). In extreme cases, violent transformations of personality - such as sudden conversions, for instance - can lead to "such a high degree of inflation that the entire personality is disintegrated", and this in turn can lead to "a 'splitting of the mind' or 'schizophrenia'" (144). In the Two Essays, in fact, Jung makes six references to "psychic inflation", and all but one of these concentrate on its deleterious effects.

Although in Christina Alberta's Father, Wells had explored this very process, in Experiment in Autobiography and The Science of Life he plays down such possibilities and emphasises what he describes as the "desirable and admirable side" of "inflation" (The Science of Life 829). Thus, although he cites Jung's description of the weakening of personal identity, to the extent that "the individual confuses himself with his official functions or with the race or with the Deity," he concentrates on the second and third of these identifications and argues that this phenomenon has "played and may still play a great part in the religious life. It may play an even greater part in the future development of our kind. A general inflation of the persona may be going on in most civilized communities" (829). The inflation of the persona also is pressed into the service of the creative world state. Does this explain why Wells appears to have been so eager to accept some aspects of Jungian theory at the expense of others? Although I disagree with some of the conclusions in Michael Draper's essay, I am sure he is right to suggest that the Utopian part of Wells wants to believe that exceptional, gifted individuals are capable not only of shaping their own personalities, but capable also of advancing the cause of human progress, and that he selects from and revises Jung's terms in order to fit them to this conjecture. It indicates, too, I believe, a conflict between his intellectual acceptance of many aspects of psychoanalytic theories, and a deep-seated, intuitive reluctance to subscribe to the power of the irrational which is implicit in them.

In Experiment in Autobiography Wells relates the concept of the persona to his novel-writing. "Throughout my life," he claims, "the
main strand of interest has been the endeavour to anchor personas to a common conception of reality" (624). This aim, he adds, is "the structural idea" of his 1915 novel, The Research Magnificent, and he refers specifically to three other novels:

this theme of the floating persona, the dramatized self, recurs at various levels of complexity and self-deception in Mr Hoopdriver in The Wheels of Chance, in the dreams of Mr Parham [Wells clearly means Preemby], in Christina Alberta's Father, and most elaborately of all in The Bulington of Blup. (624)

"Floating" is, of course, related to "anchor", but it is interesting that Wells yokes the image with "the dramatized self," because this statement follows the passage, discussed in Chapter One, in which Wells compares his mental processes with those of Conrad, Stephen Crane, Henry James and "the larger part of literary artistry" and concludes that their minds are "uneducated" - prone to "arbitrary, inconsistent and dramatized ways of thinking and living" (620) - whilst his mind, by contrast, is "educated", in accord with those of the "non-dramatizing systematically minded people" with whom he identifies (621). Wells firmly distances himself from the idea of the "floating persona." The central characters in the persona novels are all, in their different ways, self-dramatizing, subject to what Wells describes in the autobiography as "imaginative romancing in conduct" (620), and their view of themselves is, by means of various linguistic and narrative devices, measured against "a common conception of reality" (624).

The way in which language and narrative construct reality is the central concern of the persona novels because Wells sees the persona as linguistically determined. In The Science of Life it is defined as "The story we tell ourselves about ourselves" (828). A story about oneself, to be tellable even if only to oneself, can only exist in the form of language and in the telling, it becomes narrative. As David Lodge has recently pointed out "narrative is itself a kind of language that functions independently of specific formulations" (After Bakhtin 4), and each of the persona novels works out through its narrative structure the relationship of the individual to social reality.

Wells's use of "story" in this context is interesting, too, because in the same passage in The Science of Life he draws attention to
what he sees as the close relationship between the verbal constructions of literature and the reconstructions of psychoanalysis. There is one characteristic of psychoanalytic writing which worries him. Although he endorses the validity of psychoanalytic concepts - Jung's account of the human psyche, he feels, "corresponds very closely to facts in the behaviour of the people about us" (829) - he is sure, nonetheless, that "the reader will be haunted throughout, as we, the writers, have been haunted, by the feeling of metaphorical vagueness and the dangers of misconception that accompany metaphor" (827). In several passages, Wells warns the reader to beware of the dangers inherent in the language of psychology while it is still at its metaphorical stage: "In no science perhaps," he cautions, "is terminology so metaphorical and inexact as in this field of psychology" (796). It is for these reasons, Wells claims, that he has concluded: "What we are dealing with here is not so much science as literature. We give it because it is so richly suggestive, because it had [sic] at least the sort of truth that literature can convey...." (829).13

One approach to this group of novels, then, is through their language and narrative structure. At one level, Wells's persona novels can be read as case histories, which explore the various linguistic means by which the characters seek to accommodate themselves - with varying degrees of success - to whatever picture of the world is most dominant in their place and period. They also incorporate subtly innovative narrative and linguistic techniques by which Wells conveys the complexity and opacity of human personality.

13 In recent years, there has been considerable interest in the interrelations of psychoanalysis and literature. In her introduction to Discourse in Psychoanalysis and Literature, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan points to a renewed interest in psychoanalysis amongst literary theorists "in an attempt to go beyond formalism without abandoning the formal aspects of literature," whilst, she adds, psychoanalysts have become aware of "the relevance of 'literary concepts' like 'narrativity,' 'fictionality,' and 'rhetoric'...to the psychoanalytic process" (xi). In his essay on Freud's case history of "Dora", Steven Marcus starts from the assumption that "Freud is a very great writer and that one of his major case histories is a great work of literature" (In Dora's Case 57).
c) A Linguistic Approach to the Persona Novels

Narrative innovation is not an appropriate term to apply to the earliest novel on Wells's list, which is in many ways the most Victorian of all his longer fictions in its style and structure. It is easy to see, nonetheless, why Wells includes The Wheels of Chance in his list of "persona novels", although it was published in 1896, years before he had heard of Jung and persona theory. Hoopdriver, the book's hero, is a draper's assistant who, throughout the book, is attempting to present himself as he would like the world to see him. As I argued in Chapter Three, linguistic factors play a large part in this process, because if the world is to see Hoopdriver as he wishes to be seen, he is obliged to adjust his speech accordingly. He is, too, obliged to be self-dramatizing. The narrator stresses that for those in Mr Hoopdriver's position - condemned to "do the fetching and carrying of life" (71) - such re-writing of their experience is necessary if drink and eventual suicide are to be avoided. But unlike the people in Mr Gissing's novels, he suggests, Hoopdriver is protected by "natural wisdom" from seeing his life in starkly realistic terms:

On the contrary, he was always decorating his existence with imaginative tags, hopes and poses, deliberate and yet quite effectual self-deceptions; his experiences were mere material for a romantic superstructure....His entire life, you must understand, was not a continuous romance, but a series of short stories linked only by the general resemblance of their hero, a brown-haired young fellow commonly, with blue eyes and a fair moustache, graceful rather than strong, sharp and resolute rather than clever (Cp., as the scientific books say, p.4). (71-72)

The parenthesis invites the reader to refer to the opening pages of the book, where the objective, "realistic" description of Hoopdriver's appearance had been presented from the customer's viewpoint. Here the narrator suggests to the customer that she would have been unlikely to notice such an unimpressive figure at all, but, he adds, "if you had noticed anything about him, it would have been chiefly to notice how little he was noticeable" (4). From this perspective, Hoopdriver presents a very different picture. He is seen as "of pallid complexion,
hair of a kind of dirty fairness, greyish eyes, and a skimpy moustache under his peaked, indeterminate nose" (4).

Much of the humour of the book, then, comes from the ever-widening gulf between Hoopdriver's developing, yet insecure, persona and the position accorded to drapers' assistants in the class-structure of late-Victorian society. For this contrast to be wholly effective, however, the book would have to present a coherent and consistent view of the external reality - albeit an ironic one - against which Hoopdriver's "floating persona" can be assessed, and for reasons I suggest elsewhere in this study, in *The Wheels of Chance* this coherence is not achieved. Because there is no firm sense of a common external reality the reader is never sure how he/she should respond to Hoopdriver's attempts to create a new persona. What credence are we to give to the story he tells himself about himself?

In *The Research Magnificent*, however, written twenty years later, the relationship of the "floating persona" to objective reality is treated in a very different way. Wells claimed that the idea of the persona was the "structural idea" of this novel, and it is the complexity of the narrative form which plays the major role in shaping the reader's response to the attempts made by its hero, Benham, to live a noble life according to what he conceives to be the aristocratic principle. Wells's definition of the persona as a story is echoed in the repetitions of the opening sentences of the book:

The story of William Porphyry Benham is the story of a man who was led into adventure by an idea. It was an idea that took possession of his imagination quite early in life, it grew with him and changed with him, it interwove at last completely with his being. His story is its story. (3)

In the third paragraph we are told that Benham's mother had described him at the age of seventeen as "just a little unbalanced"; the narrator comments: "The interest of him, the absurdity of him, the story of him, is that" (5).

In a sense, then, *The Research Magnificent* is a narrative about narrative. Throughout the book, the text alerts the reader to the processes and problems of narration, and calls into question the "truth"
of the events it describes. Although the novel includes three
different spatial and temporal planes of focalization, it does not fit
the pattern of the framing or recursive narrative, so popular at the
turn of the century, where one story is embedded within another - as in
Heart of Darkness, for instance. In The Research Magnificent we move
back and forth between narrative levels, and there is an interplay of
voices and perspectives throughout. The categories of narrative
analysis set out in Genette's Narrative Discourse are, therefore,
particularly appropriate to a description of this novel because, unlike
most narrative theorists, Genette distinguishes between what he calls
"mood" and "voice"; an essential distinction, he insists, because there
may be an evident separation in the narrative between the one "whose
point of view orients the narrative" and the one who "speaks". "Mood",
therefore, designates the relation of the narrative to its material,
which Genette analyses in terms of distance and perspective, whilst
"voice" refers to the narrator's status in the text, examined in
relation to three categories: time of the narrating, narrative level and
"person" (the relation between the narrator and the story he tells).

This distinction between narrative and narrating becomes important
at the very beginning of the novel when, after a brief introduction to
Benham and a description of his master passion, we are told that his
story has been called The Research Magnificent because "It was a real
research, it was documented" (6). The narrator reveals that his source
of information is the papers found in Benham's rooms after his death,
and he tells us that Benham "had accumulated material for - one
hesitates to call it a book - let us call it a guide to the noble life"
(6). Then we learn that the narrator's literary judgements, too, derive
from a specific source:

There [to Benham's rooms in Westhaven Street] after his tragic
death came his old friend White, the journalist and novelist,
under a promise, and found these papers; he found them to the
extent of a crammed bureau, half a score of patent files quite
distended, and a writing-table drawer-full; and he was greatly

14 John Hammond discusses similar issues in H.G Wells and the
Modern Novel (47-8) but from a different perspective.
exercised to find them. They were, White declares, they are still after much experienced handling, an indigestible aggregation. On this point White is very assured. When Benham thought he was gathering together a book he was dreaming, White says. There is no book in it... (6)

The idea of the "untellability" of Benham's story recurs throughout the book. White, an old schoolfellow of Benham's who had been with him at his death, had promised, in Benham's last moments, to "see after" his book. But as "a trained maker of books" (8), White is dismayed by what he finds, chiefly because the papers correspond to no known literary form: "This collection of papers was not a story, not an essay, not a confession, not a diary. It was - nothing definable. It went into no conceivable covers. It was just, White decided, a proliferation. A vast proliferation" (8). On a number of occasions we are told what White would like to do with the materials he has been given. He feels, for example, that Benham's declaration of love for his future wife, Amanda, requires a "lyrical interlude....This, at any rate was what White had always done in his novels hitherto, and what he would certainly have done at this point had he had the telling of Benham's story uncontrolledly in his hands" (191). But the novel as it stands is not the one which White would have written. The narrator intercedes at this point to comment that, in his view, such a passage would not have captured Benham's actual state of mind as revealed in his papers since "real life" does not have this kind of simplicity: "Only the heroes of romance, and a few strong simple clean-shaven Americans have that much emotional integrity" (191).

In Genette's terms, therefore, the focalization of the narrative

15 In Genette's terms, Benham's narrative can be seen as functioning in two ways. Genette's most basic distinction is between "diegesis" (narrative: telling) and "mimesis" (imitation: showing). But, as he points out, narrative mimesis can only be regarded as an illusion of mimesis: "for this single and sufficient reason: that narration, oral or written, is a fact of language, and language signifies without imitating. Unless, of course, the object signified (narrated) be itself language" (Narrative Discourse 164). At one narrative level, therefore, the quotations from Benham's papers can be described as mimetic (the text reproduces his actual words) but at another they are diegetic (he is a narrator telling his own story).
of The Research Magnificent is multiple. The text often gives us the events of Benham's life, his ideas, his feelings and reactions in his own words, in the form of direct quotation from the papers. At this level there is an interplay of voices because Benham's ideas and ambitions are forcefully challenged by his hedonistic friend, Prothero, who functions in many ways as the hero's alter ego, and his plans for the noble life are at odds, too, with the demands of Amanda, the woman he marries and eventually leaves. This focalization forms what Genette terms a metadiegetic level\(^\text{16}\) in the text. At the diegetic or first story level, Benham's story is told in relation to his literary executor, White, who is reading through the papers in an attempt to prepare them for publication. Here, too, there is an interplay of voices, because White is a member of the Rationalist Press Association and (as described by the narrator) "a decent self-respecting sceptic" (34). Thus, the interpolations of White form a sceptical commentary on Benham's more idealistic passages: "...with one of his abrupt transitions Benham had written, 'This brings me to God.' 'The devil it does!' said White, roused to a keener attention" (33). Similarly, Benham's exalted exordium on mankind's need for danger and insecurity is interrupted at several points: "His arguments did not in the least convince White, who stopped to poke the fire and assure himself of his own comfort in the midst of his reading" (28); "'Mm,' said White, and pressed his lips together and knotted his brows and shook his head" (30).

At the extradiegetic level, the unnamed and uncharacterized narrator, whose narrative includes both the others, comments on White's attempts to shape a story from Benham's papers and makes judgements on Benham's actions and opinions. As he begins to work on the papers, White finds that memories of his schoolfriend "pieced themselves

\(^{16}\) Meike Bal, in "Notes on Narrative Embedding", comments on the problems raised by Genette's terminology, particularly his use of the prefix "meta": "Many researchers have been of the opinion that Genette was wrong to use the term to mean the opposite of what it traditionally means. For if in the logico-linguistic tradition the prefix meta-indicates an activity having for its object an activity of the same class, the term metadiscourse should signify: discourse on discourse, and metanarrative: a narrative on narrative" (41).
together with other memories and joined onto scraps in this writing. Bold yet convincing guesses began to leap across the gaps. A story shaped itself...." (9). But is it the right story? On several occasions, the narrator points out that White has misunderstood or made false connections. First he interprets Benham's story in terms of the Book of Tobit, later he relates it to the Christian model, but the narrator points out that White is attempting to impose a false shape on the events described, he had forgotten important details and has been led astray by his "too literary imagination" (140).

White has problems, too, with the ordering of the papers. There are unrelated "broken fragments" (390) of manuscripts which have to be pieced together, gaps and elisions which have to be filled in if a narrative is to be constructed:

Benham had never made any systematic attempt at editing or revising his accumulation at all. There were not only overlapping documents, in which he had returned again to old ideas and re-stated them in the light of fresh facts and an apparent unconsciousness of his earlier effort, but there were mutually destructive papers; new views quite ousting the old had been tossed in upon the old... (248)

It is clear that Benham exemplifies the theory of "self-consciousness" set out in Wells's thesis because there have been not one but many Benhams, and although changing stimuli have turned his mind to a different "phase of behaviour" the organism has succumbed "to the delusion that it is the same Self, still in continuous operation" ('42-

17 Although we know nothing about him, the narrator does, admittedly, intervene in the narrative (he is interested in the story he is telling and discusses it freely). This, however, does not prevent him being extradiegetic so far as Benham's story is concerned. Genette establishes two hierarchies: narrative level and diegetic function. In relation to his diegetic function (he is responsible for the telling the story at the first narrative level) the narrator does make judgements and comment on the events he is relating, so at this level he is acting, and therefore intradiegetic. He does not, however (unlike White) play any part in these events, so he is extradiegetic in relation to the story he tells. As Meike Bal points out, the diegetic level "consists of a series of events; it is not linguistic in nature, even though it is known by means of language....The subject of the diegetic level is the actor, its activity, the action" ("Notes on Narrative Embedding" 57).
White's success in his attempt to impose consistency and coherence on Benham's life and ideas can be weighed in relation to the narrator's reference to "the laborious uncertain account of Benham's life and thought" which White has recently published (368).

It could be argued that The Research Magnificent is not a wholly successful novel. The writing is at times, as the Mackenzies suggest, "melodramatic and sentimental," and I would agree, too, with their claim that Benham, so far as the achievement of his ideals is concerned, "turns out to be a failure in every respect," but it is difficult to see how they can argue that "Wells clearly intended this to be an exemplary tale" (307). On the level of events this is obviously not true, as the Mackenzies indicate. Like Conrad's Lord Jim, he leaves his wife for a shadowy ideal of conduct (despite the fervour of Benham's commitment, the varying perspectives of the book ensure that it remains shadowy) and even his death, although brave, is far from glorious; he dies in a futile and ineffectual skirmish which he himself describes as "a scuffle in the darkness" (399).

But even more to the point is the fact that although Benham's ideas about "the Invisible King in all of us" are by no means discounted, they have to contend with the forcefully expressed views of others, and, above all, with a narrative form which proscribes the projection of a single normative ideology by which all characters and ideas are to be judged. Although the narrative complexities are not maintained with complete consistency, The Research Magnificent is, in

18 Whether the fact that Benham is a failure should be regarded as a flaw in the novel would, in any case, depend on the two assumptions: 1) that it is possible to be sure of the author's intention in any text; 2) that this intention provides a valid criterion for assessing the text in question. Both of these assumptions are open to question.

19 There is considerable use of what Genette calls metalepsis or pseudodiegesis, where the discourse at one level merges with that of another. This is not in itself a fault (Genette identifies this as a major strategy in Proust) but it becomes one when it contravenes the convention of internal and external perspective which the author has himself established, as in one passage in ch. 5 where we are given an account of Amanda Benham's emotional reaction to her husband's departure which could not have been known to any of the narrators.
Bakhtin's terms, by its very structure, a polyphonic text. Benham's ideas are disputed and often effectively challenged at the metadiegetic level throughout the book. The way in which his ideas have been overtaken by events is also made clear on a number of occasions - White, for instance, is reading Benham's statement, written in 1910, that there will be no war because "the commonsense of the world would hold up this danger until reason could get 'to the head of things,'" on the night of 9th October, 1914. Thus, Benham's inadequacies are commented on at each level of narration and the effect is to indicate the virtual impossibility of "pinning down" the meaning and significance of his persona. Just before he goes to his death, Benham tells White that he is sick of the involvement in civil disorder, "I'm tired of the shouting and running, the beating and shooting." What he wants is to "begin upon the realities I have made for myself. For they are the realities. I want to go now to some quiet corner where I can polish what I have learnt, sort out my accumulations, be undisturbed by these transitory symptomatic things...." (400). Again, our attention is drawn to the delusion of the integrated self. Benham's assertions must be set against White's comment, as he struggles with the papers which encode these "realities", that the latter are mere linguistic constructs: "It is remarkable...how dependent human beings are upon statement. Man is the only animal who states a case. He lives not in things but in expressed ideas" (192).

The third novel on Wells's list, Christina Alberta's Father, is very different in style and structure from The Research Magnificent. It is Wells's most sustained attempt to deal with the persona which diverges from common external reality to the extent of insanity, and in Jungian terms this novel is very much an exemplary tale because it shows the dangerous consequences of the inflation of the persona. In The Function of the Unconscious, in fact, Jung cites the book as an example of what the term persona means. He maintains that the notion of a mask is intellectually easy to understand:

It is, however, another thing to describe, in a way that can be generally understood, those subtle inner processes which invade the conscious mind with such suggestive force. Perhaps we can best portray these influences with the help of examples of mental
illness, creative inspiration, and religious conversion. A most excellent account—taken from life, so to speak—of such an inner transformation is to be found in H.G. Wells' *Christina Alberta's Father.* (7: 172-73)

The *persona* in question is that of Albert Edward Preemby, a retired laundry man, who, shortly after the death of his wife, is tricked by a mischievous student at a séance into the belief that he is the reincarnation of Sargon, King of Sumeria. Patrick Parrinder describes the book as "a comic fable" (97), and there is something intrinsically funny in the depiction of this gentle, ineffectual little man, convinced that he is "Sargon the First, the Magnificent One, King of all Kings, the Inheritor of the World" (165), preparing to shoulder his responsibility for changing the world "on the lines of the Labour programme. Only simpler and more thorough" (189). When he attempts to lead the rabble of assorted hangers-on he regards as disciples into a fashionable restaurant, Preemby is arrested and taken to the observation ward of the Giffard Street Infirmary. From there he is certified and

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20 Jung's praise of Wells's psychological insight is somewhat vitiated by the letter written by Anthony Storr, in 1975, to Jung's biographer, Vincent Brome: "Jung valued books like Rider Haggard's *She* and H.G. Wells' novel *Christina Alberta's Father* just because they were naïve and not psychologically sophisticated. Such books, he thought, revealed the nature of the unconscious more clearly than did complicated works like those of Proust" (*Jung: Man and Myth* 288).

21 Wells had researched the history of Sargon's reign for *The Outline of History.* Sargon figures prominently, too, in the psychoanalytic literature of this period. Otto Rank's *The Myth of the Birth of a Hero* maintains that the birth history of Sargon is: "Probably the oldest transmitted myth in our possession" and he points to the links with the story of Moses (12). In a lecture on symbolism in dreams, Freud refers to Rank's book, and to Sargon. He comments on the predominant part played by exposure in the water and rescue from the water in myths about the birth of heroes, and relates this to doubts about parentage (PFL 1: 194-95). Uncertainty about parentage is, or course, central to *Christina Alberta's Father,* and it is interesting that Mr Preemby is at pains to relate the references to water made by the "Meejum" to his own origins: "'Child of the sea and the desert,' he said, 'the blue waters and the desert sand.' Is it too fanciful to find an allusion to Sheringham in that? 'Cascades and great waters and a thing like a wheel on a blue shield.' That is more puzzling. But 'cascades and great waters' set me thinking of our big washers" (125).
imprisoned in an asylum. 22

From the beginning of the book, Mr Preemby is shown, like Benham, to be slightly unbalanced. He is a man with an intensely romantic imagination, who loves reading, particularly about astrology, ancient history and the occult - "he had a great distaste for 'realism' of any kind" (24). In a conversation with his daughter, Mr Preemby tries to express his sense of the meaninglessness of life: "'Things can't be what they seem,' said Mr Preemby, waving his hand with a gesture of contemptuous dismissal towards Rusthall Village, public house, lamp-posts, a policeman, a dog, a grocer's delivery-van and three passing automobiles. 'That at any rate is obvious. It would be too absurd. Infinite space; stars and so forth. Just for running about in - between meals....Symbolical it must be, Christina Alberta. But of what?'' (94-95)

The mask of Sargon, then, is a persona that Mr Preemby is only too willing to adopt. It invests his life with a meaning and value it has never had before: "He knew clearly that to be Sargon was to be real, was to signify, was to go back into the past and reach right out into the future, was to escape altogether from the shrivelled insignificance of the Preemby life" (193). It is interesting that when Mr Preemby decides that the time has come to begin his mission, he begins to think of himself, and introduce himself to people as, Sargon, and the narrator comments: "Mr Preemby had disappeared from Christina Alberta's world. For a time he must disappear almost as completely from this story" (165). Roman Jakobson points out in his study of aphasia that "the linguistic aspect of this split personality is the patient's inability to use two symbols for the same thing" (Language in Literature 112-13).

22 In his Commentary on "The Secret of the Golden Flower", published in 1938, Jung again refers to Christina Alberta's Father, this time as an illustration of psychic fragmentation, which occurs when "split off complexes" acquire their own autonomy: "Insanity is possession by an unconscious content that, as such, is not assimilated to consciousness, nor can it be assimilated since the very existence of such content is denied. This attitude is equivalent to saying: 'We have no longer have any fear of God and believe that everything is to be judged by human standards.' This hybris or narrowness of consciousness is always the shortest way to the insane asylum. I recommend the excellent account of this problem in H.G Wells's novel Christina Alberta's Father... (CW 13: 37).
It is clear that Mr Preemby can think of himself as Preemby or as Sargon, he cannot bring the two together. The psychiatrist defines Preemby's delusions as "Necessary protective dreams" (281) which recalls the narrator's statement in The Wheels of Chance, that for "those condemned to do the fetching and carrying of life" (71) such dreams are the only answer.

Unlike Hoopdriver, however, whose romantic stories about himself enable him to adjust more or less successfully to his menial position, Preemby's conscious sense of himself as "Preemby the bystander, Preemby the onlooker, the ineffective speechless man" (239) is overwhelmed by the thrilling but dangerous mysteries he feels he has contacted. In Jung's terms, the inflation of the ego leads to a "mana personality" fashioned from the primordial images of the collective unconscious (7: 231-232). In The Function of the Unconscious, Jung describes what happens to Mr Preemby as "a classical type of compensation" (178), and adds:

Mr Preemby, a midget personality....a complete nonentity, recognizes himself as the point of intersection of all ages past and future. This knowledge is not too dearly bought at the cost of a little madness provided that Preemby is not in the end devoured by that monster of a primordial image - which in fact is what nearly happens to him. (7: 179)

After his rescue from the asylum, he is saved, in fact, by being led to think of his vision as one which is the inheritance of all men and women, which belongs to him no more than to all other human beings.

But although the language of psychoanalysis presents Christina Alberta's Father as a kind of exemplum of Jung's theories, an analysis of the text's language and structure indicates another reading. The book is structured very differently from A Research Magnificent, and the main difference can be explained in terms of two discourse features which have attracted considerable interest in linguistic criticism: "deixis" and "modality." In his essay "How to See Through Language: Perspective in Fiction", Roger Fowler defines deixis as "all the 'orientational' features of a discourse, those which orient the times, places and persons in the text with the times, place and persons associated with the production and reception of the text" (221). Deixis, then, covers
all the discursive features which "place" the reader in relation to the text, both spatially and temporally - use of pronouns, tense of verbs, adverbials and so on. Modality is described by Fowler as "the grammar of explicit comment, the means by which people express their degree of commitment to the truth of the propositions they utter, and their views on the desirability or otherwise of the states of affairs referred to" (216). It can, therefore, provide objective, linguistic indicators of the ideological stance of the text.23

One feature of Christina Alberta's Father, then, which makes it very different from the earlier book is the presence of what has traditionally been known as an omniscient narrator. This term has been disparaged in recent years because of its connotations.24 In The Nature of Narrative, Scholes and Kellogg suggest "histor" as a more neutral term. "The histor," they claim, "is the narrator as inquirer, constructing a narrative on the basis of such evidence as he has been able to accumulate" (265). He is not a character in the story, nor is he the author, but he forms "a primary narrative ingredient" of many novels. Throughout the history of narrative, it is argued:

the histor has been concerned to establish himself with the reader as a repository of fact, a tireless investigator and sorter, a sober and impartial judge - a man, in short, of authority, who is entitled not only to present the facts as he has established them but to comment on them, to draw parallels, to moralize, to generalize, to tell the reader what to think and even to suggest what he should do. (266)

23 Deixis involves a large number of word classes. Pronouns, for instance, are an important deictic feature, because they, to a large extent, determine the viewpoint of the speaker/writer and his or her relation to the hearer/reader. Time is conveyed by a variety of means; the use of verb tense; adverbs such as "eventually" or "tomorrow"; adverbials of place and time such as "here" and "there", and so on. Modality too can be expressed in a number of ways: verbs and adverbs which express degrees of certainty, "convinced" "doubted" "probably" "certainly" and so on; evaluative adjectives; certain kinds of sentence structure. In all cases, of course, modality is dependent on context.

24 For a discussion of this topic see Scholes and Kellogg. The Nature of Narrative 273; Roger Fowler "How to See Through Language" 222.
This characterises the narrator of Christina Alberta's Father exactly. His authority is evident in the opening paragraph of the book, which announces firmly and with admirable succinctness:

This is the story of a certain Mr Preemby, a retired laundryman and widower, who abandoned his active interest in the Limpid Stream Laundry, in the parish of Saint Simon Unawares, near Woodford Wells, upon the death of his wife in the year of grace 1920. Some very remarkable experiences came to him. The story is essentially a contemporary story: it is the story of London in the age of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, broadcasting, and the first Labour peers. The historical element in it is insignificant and partly erroneous, and the future, though implicitly present, is substantially ignored. (11)

The narrator's authority is established, too, in the opening chapters of the novel, by the use of generic sentences, another component of modality, defined by Fowler as "generalised propositions claiming universal truth and usually cast in the syntax reminiscent of proverbs or scientific laws" ("How to See Through Language" 217). We are told - in a series of generic statements - about the Edwardian world which had shaped Mr Preemby:

That was in the days when motor cars were still rather a joke, a smell, and a noise and wayside repairs, and flying was understood to be impossible. Queen Victoria had had her Diamond Jubilee and...
nobody thought Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, would ever survive to be King. The War in South Africa was being arranged for that summer, to last six months and employ forty thousand men. (14) One significant feature of this passage is the use of the past tense — generic statements are usually expressed in the present tense — and thus, as Fowler points out, the use of "past generics" creates a specific effect. It is, he claims, "an important method for creating the illusion of an estranged or superseded past" because such usages always imply a comment on one's own time: "Speaking in this mode, one simultaneously evokes two time-spheres, each with its own set of values, the earlier eradicated, surpassed, by the qualities of the later" (Literature as Social Discourse 122). All of the assumptions of the Edwardian era which the narrator lists as universally accepted propositions are, at the moment of the narrative present, known to have been wrong. This is significant because one of the most important of the polarities established by the text is the opposition between the irrationality of Preemby (who finds his raison d'être in the past) and the rationality of Devizes (whose philosophy looks towards the future). The histor tells us in the first two chapters of the book about the personal "historical element" which involves Mr Preemby's meeting with Christine Hossett and their remarkably swift courtship — "He was carried over his marriage as a man might be carried over a weir" (22) — but conceals some very important facts.27 Since, in the first two chapters, events are seen from the perspective of Preemby, his innocence and vulnerability are established from the outset, because it never occurs to him to question his part in Christina Alberta's procreation. The reader, on the other hand is given a number of clues which suggest that Mr Preemby's status as the book's eponymous hero is highly

27 This does not mean that the histor as story-teller is always wholly in control of his material. One of the humorous effects of the novel is, in fact, his inability to keep the focus, as he had promised, on Mr Preemby. The effect is to make the reader aware that the book is exploring the notion of the "floating persona" in relation to both characters. This does not mean, however, that we doubt the truth of the events the narrator recounts, nor does it mean, as William Scheick suggests, that his intrusion "dispels the reader's illusion of reality" (The Splintering Frame 45). Seen in the context of the book as a whole narrator is not unreliable although he may be inept.
doubtful.

The mystery is not resolved until two thirds of the way through the book. Up to that point, however, we accept the narrator's view of events and his account of what the characters cannot see for themselves. After Preemby has told Christina Alberta about his reincarnation as Sargon, for instance, the focus is on her response: "She noted as they walked back towards the Petunia Boarding House that his bearing and manner had undergone a subtle change. He seemed larger and taller and his face was serener and he held his head higher" (133). It is the narrator, however, who provides an external view: "Had she been able to see herself she would have remarked an equal change in her own carriage. The dance had gone out of her paces. She walked like one upon whose shoulders the responsibilities of life might easily become overwhelming" (133).

But this pattern changes after Sargon's escape from the asylum. The narration is still, of course, in the third person, but the narrator as histor disappears, and from this point onwards the narrative is focalized through Bobby, the rescuer of Mr Preemby and would-be lover of Christina Alberta. Since he does not understand, as the reader does, the relationship between Christina Alberta and Devizes, Bobby's view of events and his responses to them are necessarily those of an outside observer. Thus there is a marked increase in what Uspensky in A Poetics of Composition calls verba sentiendi - words of feeling, "which function in the text as formal signs of description from an internal point of view" (85) - and these are all related to Bobby: "he thought" (378), "he had a vague inexplicable feeling" (378), "He had a sense of" (378) and so on. There are also a large number of "operators" which Uspensky terms "words of estrangement" (86), various ways in which we are distanced from the characters whose inner consciousnesses have been relayed to us by the histor up to this point. There are, for instance, a number of modal verbs expressing uncertainty: "that confession seemed to Bobby to explain her refusals completely and to clear up everything about her" (382); "Neither Lambone nor Devizes had seemed in the least surprised at their engagement" (385); "It seemed to Bobby that Devizes also noticed her annoyance" (386). [my italics] "The use of words of estrangement," claims Uspensky, "points to the presence of a synchronic
narrator at the place of action. We can say, then, that these words serve to fix not only the psychological viewpoint of the observer, but also his temporal and spatial viewpoint” (86).

This change in narrative perspective is important because the final chapters of Christina Alberta’s Father attempt to provide a rational answer to the central question raised by Sargon’s story: how can the individual fashion a persona which will enable him to accommodate himself to the social reality of which he is a part, while at the same time enabling him to invest his life with meaning? Several critics have found the ending of the book unsatisfactory.28 Michael Draper, for instance, claims that after Sargon’s death, the novel loses momentum and its centre of interest: “There is no concrete examination of contemporary social reality to be substituted for his imaginative challenge, only the untried opinions of a group of radicals which are cast into doubt by their very association with Preemby’s irrationality” (H.G Wells 103).

Certainly, Preemby’s “imaginative challenge” is never presented as an acceptable answer - the verdict of society and its institutions on Sargon’s attempt to invest his life with significance has been unequivocal - but there seems no reason to reject the spirited discussion of the final chapter merely because the ideas are “untried” - the ideas are, after all, for the future - and it seems unfair, too, to reject those who have tried to restore Preemby to rationality on the grounds that he has tainted them. It is, I suggest, the absence of narrator as histor, as he was earlier constituted, which deprives the final discussion of its impact. The change of focus is necessary because Wells wants to create a new mystery, and the uncomprehending gaze of Bobby - who "didn't for a moment suspect how much these people were avoiding and suppressing" (361) - can present the truth without revealing it. But this new perspective is achieved at a cost. The reader’s attention is drawn to the hidden story at the expense of the

28 A number of explanations have been offered. Ingvald Raknem comments: "We think that Christina Alberta's Father is one of Wells's best novels; the first two thirds of it are excellent; but into the last third the author obtrudes and spoils it with his discussion of ideas" (H.G Wells and his Critics 333); Batchelor claims that the novel is "encumbered with a heavily creaking plot" (H.G Wells 135).
surface one, and the novel has lost the epistemological security which would have made its open-ended conclusion acceptable.

The last of the books on Wells's list, The Bulpington of Blup, is a novel which Wells felt had been underrated. In Experiment in Autobiography he writes, "Theodore Bulpington is as good as Kipps. Please" (499), and the tone of the entreaty makes it evident that he has given up expecting anyone to agree with him. Most commentators concentrate on the novel as a satire on Ford Madox Ford, and critical assessments of its worth have varied considerably. There can be no disagreement, however, with Wells's claim that of the four persona novels, it is the one that deals "most elaborately of all" with the theme of the "floating persona" in relation to "a common conception of reality" (Experiment in Autobiography 624). This is partly because it explores the psychological development of its subject more closely, and also because it deals more exhaustively with the question: "What is reality?" When, in Christina Alberta's Father, Wilfred Devizes says that he is a Pragmatist the narrator adds:

In this sense he meant it; we, none of us, had a clear vision of reality; nobody perhaps would ever do more than approach reality. What we perceived was just that much of reality that got through to us, through our very defective powers of interpretation. (293)

This conception is not really explored in the events of the novel, however, because Mr Preemby's conviction that he is Sargon and his subsequent actions are so clearly the result of delusion that the question of interpretation scarcely arises. In The Bulpington of Blup, however, the issue is far more problematic because here the notion of the divided self is explored in relation to a character whose interpretation of reality, although presented as morally reprehensible, is much closer than Preemby's to the "common conception" - closer, perhaps, than the interpretations of some of its hero's disputants.

In The Bulpington of Blup, then, the interpretation given to

29 The description Wells gives of Ford in Experiment in Autobiography accords with this view. After recounting his meeting with Ford Madox Hueffer (Ford), Wells writes: "What he is really or if he is really, nobody knows now and he least of all; he has become a great system of assumed personas and dramatized selves" (617).
"reality" is of central importance. Should we assume unquestioningly, as most commentators have, that it is represented by the Broxteds, that it is the objective, material world as attested by science? To begin with, as I argued in Chapter One, the science versus art polarity so often advanced as an explanation of Wells's thinking is over-simplified. As Wells tells us in "Scepticism of the Instrument," it was, in fact, his scientific studies which first made him aware of the imprecision and potentially misleading aspects of language, even in as positivist a science as physics, whilst, so far as the biological sciences are concerned, the evolutionary process makes the very idea of fixed linguistic categories untenable. But at least the world of "fact," the natural world, can be measured and tested by the methods of empirical science. Socially determined reality, on the other hand, as Wells argues from "The Rediscovery of the Unique" onwards, is considerably less stable in its categories and far more difficult to define with precision.

Throughout his writing, in fact, Wells makes a clear distinction between these two kinds of "reality", which demand different forms of analysis and different terms of description, and one of his major works, The Science of Life, is structured on the dichotomy. Its first seven books are devoted to an objective description of the natural world, whilst the later sections give an account of what is termed the "subjective world" of human consciousness and conduct. Chapter 3, Book 8, which discusses the behaviour of apes, ends at "the critical point at which language and thought begin" (759), and in the next chapter Wells stresses that he is about to enter an area that differs, both ontologically and epistemologically, from that of the first part of the book. It is no longer sufficient to base conclusions on observation of behaviour: "Material processes cannot explain consciousness any more than consciousness can explain material processes; they are different

30 This is evident in Robert Bloom's analysis of The Bulpington of Blup. Although Bloom looks more closely than most critics at the working out of the novel's themes he clearly finds it difficult at times to reconcile what he conceives to be the author's intention and ideological position with the words on the page. See his account of "reality" in relation to the young Marxist disciple of Teddy Broxted whom Theodore meets on the train (Anatomies of Egotism 76).
qualities of being" (760).

This is the distinction which is explored ironically in The Bulpington of Blup. From the time he first meets the scientifically minded Broxteds, Theodore is nonplussed. At first he finds it hard to counter Teddy Broxted's arguments because, as his mother points out, they are arguing in "different universes of discourse" (72), but when he begins his studies at art school in London he finds an answer. He soon "picked up and learnt to use the most formidable word in his armoury against the hard materialism of the Broxteds - 'values,' that perfect Open Sesame to mastery over the caverns of fact. The more he heard and used this indefinable term the more he liked it" (121).

It is language and the different universes of discourse, that have given man the capacity to shape particular but diverse pictures of reality - not a new idea for Wells, of course; it had been a consistent feature of his thinking since the 1890s. In The Science of Life, he writes: "Out of the general ideas which words enable men to use, they weave a coherent picture of the whole world about them and develop a consciousness of themselves in definite relationship to it." [my italics] What is more, he emphasises, these "pictures" are constantly shifting, "[they] evolve from age to age, they come into contact and react on one another" (793). Admittedly there are limits imposed by the principle of natural selection, which prohibit any representation of the universe which exposes its possessor to danger or destruction, but there can, nonetheless, be considerable variation: "any picture that works will be tolerated" (793). There is an external, material world - Wells is never in any doubt about that - but the interpretation of that world, the pictures of it which human communities construct, are another matter. Wells uses the same imagery in his account of the young Theodore Bulpington's psychological development: "Every day that hungry young brain-cortex was seizing upon a thousand new things, words and phrases, sights and sounds, and weaving ten thousand new threads of connexion between the new and the old. It was doing its instinctive best to get a coherent picture of the universe about itself" (25).

The Bulpington of Blup explores the character of its hero in relation to this dual aspect of reality. The novel takes the form of a
bildungsroman\textsuperscript{31} which follows the psychological development of Theodore Bulpington from babyhood to maturity. He is born into a comfortably-off, late nineteenth century family, to a mother and father with considerable aesthetic pretensions, and the book traces the stages by which he learns to protect himself from the hard facts of life through the construction of a persona. From boyhood, he creates romances in which he is always cast as the hero, the Bulpington of Blup ("Blup" is Theodore's "historical" rendering of his home town, Blayport). This fantasising interacts with actuality and affects Theodore's psyche; as the narrator tells us in the opening paragraph: "the effects of doing it spread about in his brain. Sometimes it seemed to help things; sometimes to hinder them" (13).

In several passages there are suggestions that it is the effects of the unconscious that are being described. Both Jung and Freud are invoked when the narrator comments on how little is as yet understand about the human brain and "those shadows and sublimations of experience which feed its phantom life" (19) and tells us that the "real world" reached Theodore via this "inner personality": "through the mist of its urgencies and impulses, its unformulated yet influential judgements and powerful yet indistinct desires" (20). At other times it is the aware, self-conscious nature of Theodore's psyche which is stressed. The narrator tells us, for instance, that one of Theodore's favourite poses is that of Sir Theodore Bulpington, Knight and Seer, but adds: "he never got to any mystical hypnosis; he was much too actively watching the dramatic spectacle of his contemplative self" (76). There are a number of references, too, to his awareness of the drama in which he has cast himself. The Bulpington of Blup is sometimes personified as the "other self" (74) as "a visitant", "an intervener" (19), and, eventually, as "an invader, a conqueror" (13).

Theodore's notion of reality is opposed, throughout the book, to that of Teddy and Margaret Broxted, who come from a scientifically-

\textsuperscript{31} Bloom defines The Bulpington of Blup as "an anti-bildungsroman" on the grounds that "Instead of growing from an inadequate subjectivity to a mature consciousness of the objective world and his own place in it, the putative hero reverses the process, progressively embracing and inventing illusions, more and more determinedly resisting alternatives and voices that clash with his own" (Anatomies of Egotism 83).
minded family, whose constructive, forward-looking view of the world acts as a challenge to Theodore's increasingly reactionary notions. From the beginning they are identified in Theodore's mind with characters from a book his father had been reviewing, The Inheritors, a new kind of people who "saw life with a kind of cold inhuman clearness" (56).32

There is no doubt which side Wells intends us to take, and that he wants us to see Theodore as a ridiculous poseur. In Experiment in Autobiography he describes the novel as "a very direct caricature study of the irresponsible disconnected aesthetic mentality. It is friendship's offering to the world of letters from the scientific side" (624). And he goes on to describe his struggles to define his own persona in relation to the "pull" of the artistic world as against the scientific: "as to whether I should keep my mental effort based on an objective or float off into dreamland" (625). This assertion explicitly links the author's choices with those of his characters. Throughout The Bulpington of Blup, Theodore is juxtaposed with people of social conscience who want to act on the world, "prigs" like the Broxteds and his Fabian Aunt Lucinda, but he escapes through his fantasies: "At their lower levels the Prigs might root and question. The bubble of his imagination had floated him off above all that" (192). Michael Draper argues that in the twenties and thirties, Wells was attempting a "personal transformation from potential Bulpington to potential Broxted," and points to Wells's apersonal comment on himself in the Preface to The Food of the Gods, written in 1924: "Temperamentally he is egotistic and romantic, intellectually he is clearly aware that the egotistic and romantic must go" ("Wells, Jung and the Persona" 439).

What the author tells us about his book, however, is not necessarily what the text expresses. A close examination of particular features of The Bulpington of Blup calls into question a number of Wells's assertions. So far as the novel's themes are concerned, the various worlds to which Theodore's aestheticism is opposed are not endorsed as positively as the comments in Experiment in Autobiography

32 This book, by Conrad and Hueffer, was published in 1902.
would suggest. But far more important in determining the reader's response is the language and form of the novel. The Bulpington of Blup conforms to the accepted pattern of the classic realist novel, which, David Lodge claims, is characterized by "a balanced and harmonized combination of mimesis and diegesis" (After Bakhtin 37). What Genette terms "the narrative of events" (Narrative Discourse 164), is presented by a third person narrator, whose function is markedly different from that of the narrator in Christina Alberta's Father. There is no attempt to withhold information and create mysteries, as in the earlier book, and, by contrast, the narrator is much less intrusive. Admittedly the reader's response is often guided by the narrator's ironic comments, but he seldom makes direct statements about the hero's shortcomings, and he employs very few generic sentences.

So far as mimesis is concerned, the representation of direct speech occupies a considerable proportion of the text in The Bulpington of Blup. There are a large number of conversations and arguments: between Theodore's parents and their visitors, arguments with the Broxteds and, later, the Bernsteins, extended conversations with Aunt Lucinda, and so on, in which different philosophies are debated and Theodore's ideas are challenged and put to the test from a variety of perspectives. This does not in itself, or course, ensure that a novel

33 The socially-aware Fabianism of Aunt Lucinda is worthy but dull, the Marxism of the Bernsteins is fervent but unthought out, and the revolutionary zeal of the singularly unappealing white-faced young man at the end of the book is fanatical - which casts some doubt on his adulation of Teddy Broxted. Even the world of science is not presented uncritically; Professor Broxted's dismissal of philosophy and ethical responsibility, for instance, is called into question (69).

34 The five occasions in which the narrator does call attention to himself by reminding us that he is telling a story occur in the middle sections of the book which record the traumatic effect of the war upon Theodore Bulpington - the period in which Theodore finds it most difficult to accommodate his persona to the pressure of external events. The effect of these "intrusions" is ironic. The narrator says he will not tell us what happened at Theodore's army medical: "...for reasons that we shrink from thrusting too harshly upon the reader we cannot describe that scene. Theodore described it to himself with variations, several times. It had at any rate that much reality" (213).
is, in Bakhtin's terms, "dialogic." If the author or his spokesman always has the last word and the clash of opinion is always subordinated to one dominant ideology, the text is monologic, and the effect is more akin to the monologic form of drama. As Bakhtin stresses: "The dramatic dialogue in drama and the dramatized dialogue in the narrative forms are always encased in a firm and stable monologic framework" (Problems 17).

My claim that The Bulpington of Blup is a genuinely dialogic novel, is based less on the representation of external points of view than on the contending voices within Theodore himself, and on the tension which is set up between the representation of his thought processes and the comments of the narrator.

The focus of the narrative is on Theodore Bulpington, from beginning to end. The most important opposing voice is that of Teddy Broxted, whose direct presence in the novel is relatively small. After the sixth chapter he does not appear in person, although his actions and ideas are reported by his sister Margaret, and Broxted's philosophy continues to play a fundamental part in Theodore's thinking, despite his attempt to repress it. During his ten years in Paris, we are told, he forgets about Margaret and Teddy:

he forgot them wilfully and with an apparent thoroughness....But indeed he did not forget them at all, only now they reappeared in veiled and generalized shapes as Materialism, as the Delusion of Progress, as the Mechanical Spirit, as "this new Pragmatic Irrationalism of Science." Against them he assembled and assimilated every idea and every conviction to which he felt they would necessarily have been opposed. It was not a deliberate choice; it was an unavoidable rally. (343)

The encounter with Teddy's disciple on the train and the news of his old

35 In Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, Bakhtin makes it clear that he sees Dostoevsky as the inventor of the polyphonic or dialogic novel: "What unfolds in his novels is not a multitude of characters and fates in a single objective world illuminated by a single authorial consciousness; rather a plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world, combine but are not merged in the unity of the event" (6). This implies that the novels of most other writers are monologic, but in The Dialogic Imagination, Bakhtin implies that the novel is by its very nature dialogic or polyphonic because of the way language functions in a novel, and the varieties of discourse which are available to it (261-66).
friend's professional eminence gives Theodore a nasty shock: "This abrupt resurrection of Teddy out of his burial place in the Unconscious, with a blaze of success and enthusiasm, was more intolerable than anything that had gone before" (351). In no time at all, however, Theodore has created a drama in which he rediscovers and wins Margaret, and "then, with Margaret indissolubly his, he would face facts, adopt the proper Inheritor attitudes, join their ranks and work with a steadfast grim persistence. Presently become of dominating importance among them, the Inheritors' Mirabeau...." (360). This reinterpretation enables him to set out for his new home in Devon the next morning "Brushed and shaved and with his values reassembled" (361).

The absurdity of Theodore's fantasies and the juxtapositions of the text make the irony clear, of course, but the intense focalization on a central character, anti-hero though he may be, produces another, less obvious effect. The form of the novel requires that Theodore's fantasies, thoughts and feelings be rendered in free indirect discourse (FID). The novel includes a number of lengthy passages where FID is used in a sustained way, whilst from the very beginning there are few passages which do not include some of its features. The romantic adventures which occupy the young Theodore's fantasies, for instance, are recounted by the narrator, but in prose which follows the train of the little boy's thought and adopts his lexis - or, at least, that of the stories which fire his imagination. Blup acquires a castle, for instance: "And at the sunset gun the great embroidered banner of The Bulpington fell down fold upon fold, fold upon fold, gold thread and shining silk, and gave place to the little storm flag that fluttered through the night" (18).

36 There has been considerable interest during the last twenty years or so in free indirect discourse - its linguistic and discourse features, its significance in the text, the way it relates to such issues as mimesis, point of view, ideology and so on. There is considerable variation in terminology: "style indirect libre" (Bally); "quasi-direct discourse" (Volosinov); "free indirect speech" (Halliday). Brian McHale quotes Pascal's view that in the phrase "free indirect speech", "speech...refers not to 'actual spoken language' but to a 'mode of discourse'; why not, then, simply call it 'free indirect discourse'?" ("Free Indirect Discourse" 250). Since most of the recent work on this topic stresses the "double-faced" aspect of this form, "free indirect discourse" does seem the most informative term.
As he grows older, Theodore's stories get longer and become more self-protective, and his fantasies, rationalizations and general thought processes are increasingly rendered in FID; actual experience is filtered through "the romantic interpreter in his mind" (146). For Theodore language is a protection, a way of re-shaping and re-organising the world so that he can fit it to his desires. When, for instance, he becomes increasingly aware that his mistress, Rachel Bernstein, is making use of him, "About Rachel he wove a web of interpretations so wilful and dense that even her increasing disposition to be frank could not break it" (146).

In literary terms, FID is generally described as a form of speech or thought emanating from a represented character reported in a manner which reproduces to some extent features of the original speech act. In Problems in Dostoevsky's Poetics, Bakhtin distinguishes between direct unmediated discourse, which is described as "discourse directed exclusively toward its referential object, as an expression of the speaker's ultimate semantic authority" (199) - the direct address of the author or of a narrator functioning as his spokesman; "objectified discourse" (199), which may be the represented direct speech of the characters, or may take the form of interior monologue or "stream of consciousness"; and "double-voiced discourse," which Bakhtin defines as "discourse with an orientation toward someone else's discourse" (199). FID is, therefore, an instance of double-voiced discourse. It occurs in literary discourse when the narrator's speech is not representing the external world (non-linguistic experience) but representing another speech act (a linguistic representation). Bakhtin claims that by taking on some features of the speech of the character the narrator abrogates some of his responsibility - his "ultimate semantic authority" (199) - but at the same time "Someone else's words introduced into our own speech inevitably assume a new (our own) interpretation and become

37 This definition and my analysis of FID in this novel draws on Brian McHale's typology of represented speech in "Free Indirect Discourse: A Survey of Recent Accounts"; Volosinov's account of "quasi-direct discourse" in Marxism and the Philosophy of Language; Page's scale of "degrees of indirectness" in Speech in the English Novel; and Halliday's account of direct speech, indirect speech and free indirect speech in An Introduction to Functional Grammar.
subject to our interpretation of them; that is, they become double­voiced" (195). Volosinov claims that "quasi-direct discourse" (FID) is by its very nature "double-faced" (Marxism and the Philosophy of Language 144), and, he argues, it produces a particular effect:

In the objective linguistic phenomenon of quasi-direct discourse, we have a combination not of empathy and distancing within the confines of an individual psyche, but of the character's accents (empathy) and of the author's accents (distancing) within the confines of one and the same linguistic construction. (155)

Either of these aspects - distancing, which may be ironic, or empathy - may predominate in any passage of FID, thus, as McHale points out: "FID may serve as a vehicle for lyric fusion with the character or ironic distancing from him, or, most interestingly of all, may be equivocal between the two" ("Free Indirect Discourse" 275).

All of these effects are, I believe, present in The Bulpington of Blup, and I shall trace their significance in two key passages from the novel. First, however, it is necessary to identify some of the most important indices of FID. Neither Bakhtin nor Volosinov details specific linguistic markers of double-voiced discourse. Volosinov, in fact, decries attempts to do so because, he claims, quasi-direct discourse is not a fixed form but one of gradation (145)38 and, what is more, one in which the boundaries are constantly changing (126). Nonetheless, Halliday's account of free indirect speech in An Introduction to Functional Grammar does provide helpful and illuminating linguistic guidelines for analysing the effects described by Bakhtin and Volosinov.

Halliday analyses free indirect speech in relation to direct speech and indirect speech, but he agrees with the literary theorists insofar as he believes FID cannot be pinned down to a precise pattern, nor can it be described as an intermediate form: "it is not so much intermediate as anomalous" (240). It is anomalous because it possesses

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38 This is an important feature of FID, it can range from discourse which is only just distinguishable from that of the narrator to discourse which comes close to interior monologue. McHale designates a range of possibilities on a scale from "the 'purely' diegetic to the 'purely' mimetic" ("Free Indirect Discourse" 258).
some of the features of the other two types. Like direct speech, FID is paratactic in structure, which means that the "projected clause" (the represented speech) has the form of the independent clause and retains the mood of the quoted form. This results from the fact that parataxis is "the relationship between two like elements of equal status, one initiating and the other continuing" (195); it is a relation of coordination as opposed to hypotaxis, a relation of subordination. Like indirect speech, however, FID is a report and not a direct quotation of what is said or thought, therefore all deictic forms are shifted away from the speech situation: time and person are shifted - "is" becomes "was," "I" becomes "he," and so on.

Halliday notes another feature which has important consequences for literary interpretation: "The intonation pattern of free indirect speech is still further anomalous since it follows that of quoting and not that of reporting: the projected clause takes the intonation that it would have had if quoted (that is, identical with its unprojected form)" (240). This, Halliday, claims, is because the projected clause retains the status of an independent speech act. Volosinov makes a similar point, quasi-direct discourse is "an arena in which two intonations, two points of view, two speech acts converge and clash" (134).39

It would be possible to select passages from any part of The Bulpington of Blup to illustrate the variety of effects produced by free indirect discourse. In Theodore's art student period, for instance, we are told:

39 Bakhtin rejects linguistics as a means of understanding dialogic relationships because he sees these as a feature of discourse - "of language in its concrete living totality" (Problems 181) - rather than of language per se: "when studying 'dialogic speech,' linguistics must utilize the results of metalinguistics" (Problems 183). My recourse to Halliday's description of language is, however, very different from the "abstract objectivism" of Formalist linguistics which Bakhtin/Volosinov rejects since it is based on function and assumes that "the form of the grammar relates naturally to the meanings that are being encoded" (xvii). In any case, Halliday's account of free indirect speech is, strictly speaking, metalinguistic since it appears in a section headed "Above the Clause: the Clause Complex" and, as Halliday points out, the term "encompasses a wide range of different feature combinations; it is a 'projected space' rather than a single invariant pattern" (238n).
He was among the first of those who brought the phraseology of Communism into the rich abundant world of art-studio talk. He anticipated "Proletart" with his "Art of the Social Revolution". When he drew he put revolutionary feeling (whatever that was) into his line. (113)

In this passage, the first sentence is double-voiced. It could, of course, be regarded as a straight narrative of events, but it is certainly possible - and equally plausible - to hear the boastful tones of the Bulpington of Blup in the simple statement. The second sentence is explicitly marked for two voices since it includes two direct quotations - the words in inverted commas may be ascribed to Theodore or they may be drawn from the register of the radical wing of the art world. But what of the third sentence? To what extent does Theodore believe that this is what he is doing? It depends on whether we ascribe the parenthetical question to the narrator - in which case it is an ironical aside, a "man in the street's" objective view of Theodore's artistic aspirations as genuine but nonsensical - or, whether we hear the aside as Theodore's, because if we do, he is marked as a hypocrite, expounding pretentious ideas he neither believes nor even understands. In passages such as these we see what Volosinov calls "the phenomenon of speech interference" (137). By the time the final sentence of this paragraph is reached, the narrator's comment that Theodore has found a number of ways through which "The threat of drudgery and veracity was lifted from him" (113) has lost the ironic force it might have possessed in another context. Too many ambivalences have been established.40

This passage, which is typical of many others in the book, exemplifies in linguistic terms the effect of paratactic relationships in FID - the projected clauses (Theodore's) and the projecting clauses (the narrator's) function at the same level in the grammar of the text.

40 David Lodge calls this the "Fish effect" (After Bakhtin 53). Stanley Fish has demonstrated that the process of reading, which is inevitably linear, involves the reader in a series of hypotheses and deductions which are constantly being revised and readjusted as he proceeds from word to word, sentence to sentence, and so on. Nonetheless, Fish claims, the mistaken, projected meaning is never wholly discarded ("Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics"). Reading theorists like Frank Smith have reached similar conclusions.
Since, as Halliday indicates, FID has the status of an independent speech act as in direct speech, Theodore's thoughts and judgements possess as much validity (in syntactic terms) as those of the narrator. This is not true, of course, at the semantic level. It does not follow that we approve of what he feels, nor that we accept what he says as true in terms of the ideology of the book as a whole. The seeming freedom is important, nonetheless, in mediating the reader's response because, as Bakhtin stresses, dialogic utterances must be "embodied"; in the course of becoming discourse, they acquire "an author, that is, a creator of the given utterance whose position it expresses....A dialogic reaction personifies every utterance to which it responds" (184).

Another feature of FID which is clearly indicated in this and many similar passages is the interaction and interpenetration of the two voices. It is double-voiced not only because we can clearly identify two accents and two ideological positions but also because, in a number of instances, we cannot. As Dillon and Kirchoff point out: "Paradoxically, FIS, in which the possibilities of confusing a narrator with his character are greatest, is also the mode through which the character seems freest from the mediating agency of the narrator" ("On the Form and Function of Free Indirect Speech" 438).

Direct speech and FID are used for the final confrontation in the cottage-garden between Captain Blup-Bulpington (Theodore's final persona) and the universe. He has spent the evening at a dinner party where his description of his heroism in capturing the Kaiser has forced him to acknowledge the possibility that he has become "an outrageously careless and preposterous liar" (399). Even the natural world seems to arraign him - "The quickset hedges on either side of him became like a jury that reserves a verdict....Long trailers of bramble leant forward blackly as though to hear better" (399) - but Theodore's defensive response prompts questions which the narrator does not attempt to answer. In a long and passionate tirade in which he seeks to rationalize what he has done with his life, Theodore raises the issue of the "saving illusion" and contends with T.S Eliot, that "human kind cannot bear very much reality" ("Burnt Norton," Four Quartets):

"Lies," he said. "But working lies! Mark that! Lies that have held lives together. Lies that have made men heroes. Lies that
have comforted the dying. Lies like the whispering of angels in
the ear of despair. Grand lies, I tell you, Grand." (402).
And he even sees lying as an indispensable adjunct of language itself
and an inescapable and indispensable part of being human.41 Modern man,
he claims, has been changed from the Adam who walked with God into a
"tormented ape": "One gift that poor ape had to help it in its hideous
battle with fact. It could lie. Man is the one animal that can make a
fire and keep off the beasts at night. He is the one animal that can
make a falsehood and keep off the beasts of despair" (403).

The narrator's lack of comment in these passages may, of course,
be taken as an ironic assent to the views of the character, nonetheless,
the voice of the Bulpington of Blup is neither contained nor controlled,
and the questions he raises are left unanswered. It is for these
reasons, I would argue, that The Bulpington of Blup does not now read
as an unequivocal attack on its hero's attitudes that Wells's comments
in Experiment in Autobiography would suggest. I am not attempting to
overturn the accepted thematic interpretation of the novel. Theodore
Bulpington is often despicable; he is a liar and a poseur; and in wider
terms the social irresponsibility and anti-scientific prejudice he
displays can be seen as reactionary and even a source of potential
danger to the advancement of society. Nonetheless, because of the
compositional form Wells has chosen, Theodore's voice remains
provocative. Perhaps Wells himself did come to realise this. Soon
after the completion of the book, he wrote a letter to his agent,
explaining that Theodore Bulpington is "an acutely differentiated

41 Forty years earlier, Prendick had made a similar statement in
The Island of Doctor Moreau: "An animal may be ferocious and cunning
enough, but it takes a real man to tell a lie" (172). In the context of
this book, however, it is a savage comment on man's failure to live up
to his responsibilities. In the later novel, because of the specific
context and the form of discourse, it is far more ambiguous.
Bulpington's statement, in fact, anticipates Umberto Eco's definition
of the sign: "Semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a
sign. A sign is everything which can be taken as significantly
substituting for something else. This something else does not
necessarily have to exist or to actually be somewhere at the moment in
which a sign stands for it. Thus semiotics is in principle the
discipline studying everything which can be used in order to lie. If
something cannot be used to tell a lie, conversely it cannot be used to
tell the truth: it cannot in fact be used 'to tell' at all" (A Theory of
Semiotics 7).
character but there is something of all of us in his mental tangles and though he is an unfaithful lover, an outrageous liar, and narrowly escapes being shot for cowardice, he keeps more of our sympathy to the end than perhaps some of us will care to admit."

In the three later *persona* novels Wells eschews the textual disruptions favoured by his modernist contemporaries but nonetheless, brings psychoanalytic insights to his exploration of the "mental tangles" of his characters and articulates the notion of the split self by means of a number of interesting and innovative linguistic and structural devices. These are all the more effective because they are incorporated within a traditional realist format.

d) Language, Dreams and the Unconscious

The protagonists of the *persona* novels are divided personalities, but their schizophrenia is only an extreme form of what Wells saw as a common property of all human-beings:

> From his very first visible appearance upon the terrestrial stage *Homo Sapiens* at any rate, in all his varieties, is a social animal becoming steadily more social, with suppressions, with tabus, with a sense of sin. He appears from his very beginnings as a being of incomparable mental power - divided against itself. (*The Science of Life* 863)

This division is inevitable in Wells's view, because from the beginnings of human communities - as, in fact, a prerequisite for living in communities - human beings have been required to suppress fundamental sexual drives. As *The Science of Life* makes clear, "Human society became possible through this primary suppression, and it is hard to imagine how it could have become possible in any other way" (860). Man

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42 This letter was written to A.P Watt, on August 9 1932 (qted. in Smith 301-02). The account Wells gives of the book may explain the very strong reactions it seems to have aroused in a number of critics, which I find puzzling because I find myself unable to share them. Bloom, for instance, claims that "Toward the end of the book we withdraw almost with loathing from Theodore" (*Anatomies of Egotism* 38). Smith says that "we cannot ever like him" and also comments - revealingly - "we are led to think of ourselves with contempt as similar to Bulpington in all his tragedy" (299). Does the book produce a different effect on women readers?
cannot fit into society except by "individual self suppression" (863), and this entails the repression of desires which, because they must always be forced out of consciousness, can return only in the form of dreams.

It has been suggested that Wells never really understood the Freudian view of the unconscious, that he merely grafted psychoanalytic ideas on to his pre-existing theories in a way that was ultimately reductive. In "Wells, Jung and the Persona", for instance, Michael Draper describes as "simplistic" Wells's argument that there is "a fundamental conflict between the libidinous drives at the base of human nature, which are the product of natural evolution, and a restraining, directing conscience overlaying these, the product of cultural evolution since the Palaeolithic era" (441). John Huntingdon, too, suggests that Wells misunderstands Freud: "For Wells the unconscious is not Freud's repressed but active system of values and desires inspired by guilt and in turn generating further guilt, but the instinctual drives that tend to disrupt the rational and ethical organization of civilization" ("Problems of an Amorous Utopian" 415).

There are, certainly, fundamental differences, but Wells is in many ways closer to Freud than Huntingdon and Draper's comments suggest. Wells saw no difference at all between his stance and that of the new science. In The Science of Life he endorses the theories set out in J.J Atkinson's Primal Law which explain the earliest forms of social life amongst the primordial Hominidae. Arguing back from the incest taboo, which is virtually universal, Atkinson theorised that these early social groups comprised small herds, each under the leadership of a dominant male - the "Old Man" - who drove off the younger males who challenged his position and his possession of the females of the group. These theories, Wells claims, "remain of paramount importance and value in

43 This is not to suggest, of course, that these theories and conjectures were necessarily valid. Anthony Storr, points out that Freud was writing in an era of "armchair psychology" and that his principal sources, Darwin's Descent of Man, Sir James Frazer's The Golden Bough, and the theories of Robertson Smith and J.J Atkinson "are now partly or wholly discredited" (85). It is significant that Wells was very much influenced by Atkinson's Primal Law. References to the "Old Man" recur throughout Wells's work; Atkinson is cited in the footnotes to the thesis and referred to extensively in one of Wells's last novels Babes in the Darkling Wood.
human biology," and he adds: "The whole theory of psychoanalysts rests upon such ideas and is in entire harmony with them" (860). There is no doubt that many of Freud's and Jung's writings do draw on these and similar theories, which were widely accepted at the turn of the century.

Wells, Freud and Jung - in common with many other thinkers of their period - are constantly seeking explanations of human behaviour in terms of its origins. In his early writings, and in The Outline of History, The Science of Life and his doctoral thesis, Wells argues that morality and the human sense of sin have their beginnings in primordial taboos. Similarly, in Totem and Taboo, Freud claims that in the primitive tribe the killing of the father (Atkinson's "Old Man") by his sons was "the beginning of so many things - social organization, of moral restrictions and of religion" (SE 13: 142). This, he claims, is because

they created out of their filial sense of guilt the two fundamental taboos of totemism, which for that very reason inevitably corresponded to the two repressed wishes of the Oedipus complex. Whoever contravened those taboos became guilty of the only two crimes with which primitive society concerned itself.

Freud's contention, therefore, that "primitive man survives potentially in every individual" (PFL 2: 155) wholly concurs with Wells's view.

Both Wells and Freud, in fact, were influenced by what is now seen as an important strand in late Victorian, early twentieth century thought. Although Wells insisted that his was the kind of mind which looked to the future, much of his work is concerned with the explanation

44 The study of language, for instance, was dominated by the search for origins (see Max Müller, Lectures on the Science of Language 262 ). Freud sought an explanation of the unconscious in the origins of words. In an essay written in 1910, "The Antithetical Meaning of Primal Words," he claims: "In the correspondence between the peculiarity of the dream-work...and the practice discovered by philology in the oldest languages, we may see a confirmation of the view we have formed about the regressive, archaic character of the expression of thought in dreams" (SE 11: 161). In "Origins and Oblivion in Victorian Narrative," Gillian Beer describes the fascination with origins and with history as the nineteenth century's response to the theories of Darwin, and the work of geologists, which destroyed old certainties and created "a newly intensified sense of evanescence associated with concepts of geological time, of extinction, and of irreversible and random genetic mutation" (Arguing with the Past 14).
of the present in terms of the past. One of Freud's favourite metaphors for psychoanalytic procedures is "archaeological investigation," (PFL 12: 256-59) and he insists on "the archaic nature of dreams" because, he claims, dreams lead us back not only into "prehistoric" of the individual, his infancy and childhood, but also, "in so far as each individual somehow recapitulates in an abbreviated form the entire development of the human race, into phylogenetic prehistory too" (PFL 1: 235). As Gillian Beer comments:

The insistence on displacing the experience of the individual life cycle into that of the society or species is so familiar to us that we rarely, too rarely perhaps, examine it. The vacillation between ontogeny and phylogeny has been the most powerful new metaphor of the past hundred years. (Arguing with the Past 17)

This metaphor is one which Wells draws on frequently in his work, because it relates to his ideas about the relation between the individual subject and society, and it also underlies his approach to dreams and the unconscious.

The best insight into Wells's view of the unconscious is through his treatment of dreams, which play an important part in his fiction. He uses the word "dream" in a variety of senses. It can signify an ideal but can also stand for a delusion. It relates to fantasies - Bulpington's flights of fancy are often described as dreams - to day-dreaming and reveries as well as to sleeping dreams. "Without reverie," writes Wells in his autobiography, "life would surely be unendurable to

45 In Wells's Discovery of the Future (his lecture at the Royal Institution in 1902) the nineteenth century obsession with prehistory is seen as having made a positive contribution to the study of the future. If observing the present and asking "Why?" has enabled modern science "without any guiding tradition and indeed in the teeth of established beliefs, to construct this amazing searchlight of inference into the remoter past" then "by seeking for operating causes instead of fossils, and by criticising them as persistently and thoroughly as the geological record has been criticised, it may be possible to throw a light of inference forward instead of backward, and to attain to a knowledge of coming things as clear, as universally convincing, and infinitely more important to mankind than the clear vision of the past that geology has opened to us during the nineteenth century" (27).
the greater multitude of human beings" (75).

Very early in his career, Wells wrote a piece for the Pall Mall Gazette called "The Dream Bureau" (October 25 1893) in which he deplores the fact that recent scientific work on dreams has destroyed their mystery - "The prestige of dreams has faded - dream-like" - and he goes on to imagine a way in which the new discoveries could be used with advantage through the establishment of a dream bureau, where dreams could be ordered at will, and "We would make our own worlds out of inexhaustible dream stuff and live in them." The whole idea is slight and treated jokily - in this article dreams seem to function rather like the soma in Aldous Huxley's Brave New World - but it is ironic to hear Wells, in 1893, asserting magisterially: "the days (and nights) of the dream, as a mentor and master, have certainly gone for ever from the earth," at the very time that Sigmund Freud in Vienna was embarking on his great discovery that "The interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind" (PFL 4.769). It is clear, however, from Wells's fiction that he soon learned how wrong he had been, and that he appears to have paid considerable attention to Freud's theory of dreams.

In a number of novels and short stories, the dream functions primarily as a plot device. In the novel entitled The Dream, for instance, Wells is not at all interested in the nature of dreams as such, despite a half-hearted attempt in the final chapter to explain dreams as a form of Jungian race memory which compensate the unfortunate "memory-ghosts" of less fortunate ages. At this point, Sarnac offers a mystical but extraordinarily vacuous comment about his experience as Harry Mortimer Smith - "It was a life and it was a dream, a dream within this life; and this life too is a dream. Dreams within dreams, dreams containing dreams, until we come at last, maybe to the Dreamer of all dreams, the Being who is all beings" (319) - which has nothing at all to do with the vividly realised depiction of contemporary life, seen from

46 In his last book, The Happy Turning, Wells writes that he is dreaming more than he did before the war, but adds: "I never dream about the war....When I sleep, a more adult and modern and civilised part of my being comes into play. More and more are my dreams what I believe the psychologists call compensatory; the imaginations I have suppressed revolt and take control" (21).
the perspective of a more enlightened future, which is effectively the book's subject. The Dream is, in fact, an inversion of the medieval dream vision narrative; a modern version of the veridical somnium, in which Sarnac is given a view of the past, just as the medieval dreamer was given a true interpretation of the present or vision of the future.47 "H.G.W's Introduction to The Shape of Things to Come, "The Dream Book of Dr Philip Raven" serves a similar function. Here J.W Dunne's ideas of the vision of the future which could be obtained between sleeping and waking is extended as a way of writing a "history" of the future.48

Dreams function, also, in Wells's fiction, as a useful means of introducing fantasy elements within a realist narrative without sacrificing plausibility. In The Autocracy of Mr Parham, for instance, the device of both major characters falling asleep at a séance and

47 Surely the last chapter shows that Wells was aware of the mediaeval parallels. It is hard to read the genial guest-master's description of himself - "Many good men were like me, jolly men with a certain plumpness, men with an excellent taste for wine and cookery, who loved men almost as much as they loved the food and drink that made men" - without being reminded of Chaucer's Harry Baily. And we do know from The Bulpington of Blup that "jolly" (pace Chesterton and Belloc is Wells's favourite word for evoking thoughts of the Middle Ages. See Experiment in Autobiography 191; The Bulpington of Blup 28-30. Wells had probably read William Morris's A Dream of John Ball which draws on this narrative form.

48 The relationship Dunne seeks to establish between dreaming and time obviously fascinated Wells because he cites An Experiment in Time in an article, "New Light on Mental Life" (The Way the World is Going 210-20); in The Science of Life (840). But he sees Dunne's theories primarily as an imaginative resource. In an Appendix to The Conquest of Time, Wells comments on his own speculations on space and time in the Scientific Romances, and then argues that Dunne had not thought very well in this field: "The story-teller's bluff had deceived him. He accepted its suggestions as a man in the audience takes a forced card from a conjuror" (72). For Wells, space and time are inescapable factors - he has clung to "the conclusion of [his] student days that nothing can exist without length, breadth, thickness and duration" (73) - and the persons novels are all, in their various ways, about people who, like Bulpington, attempt to "put the space-and-time garment aside" (The Bulpington of Blup 180).
having similar dreams about war and dictatorship - "but each in his own
fashion - each with his own distinctive personal reference" (364) -
enables Wells to present a satirical fantasy of what could happen were
university educated imperialists allowed free sway, whilst at the same
time turning the tables on the Oxford historian, Parham, who covets
power because he sees himself as one of "the heirs of history"(6). But
in this book too, the dream is more important as a plot device than as
an exploration of the unconscious. Admittedly, Mr Parham's dream does
explore unacknowledged narcissistic wishes, but the book as a whole is
more interested in satirising his ego-centred longing for power and
recognition. For a more revealing view of Wells's view of the dream and
the unconscious it is necessary to focus on the narratives which
explore, in a variety of ways, the return of the repressed.

e) The Primordial Dream

Many of the dreams depicted in Wells's fiction are concerned with the
interaction of the personal and the collective unconscious. Dream
merges into hallucination in both The Croquet Player and Mr Blettsworthy
on Rampole Island as the dreamer makes contact with an atavistic past.

The novella, The Croquet Player, appears at first to be a ghost
story, told by a Doctor Finchatton to a fellow guest on the terrace of a
hotel at a resort in Normandy. Finchatton, who is undergoing treatment
for his nerves, tells how, after he had sunk his capital into a practice
on the ostensibly peaceful and idyllic Cainsworth Marshes, he began to
feel increasingly oppressed by a sense of evil and menace which, he
claims, emanates from underground. To allay his fears he visits the
local museum, where the curator-archaeologist shows him the oldest and
most complete skull that has been unearthed, and this experience
triggers fearful dreams: "More and more did the threat of that
primordial Adam dominate me. I could not banish that eyeless stare and
that triumphant grin from my mind, sleeping or waking" (55). Dreadful
things happen: a local vicar, subject to the same terrors as Finchatton,
attacks his elderly wife because he is obsessed with the ideas that she
is poisoning him; a dog is found by the side of the road, battered to a
pulp. The doctor's story is later endorsed to some extent by his nerve
specialist, a "psychotherapeutist" called Norbert, who acknowledges that
the events described did occur, but argues that they are not in themselves remarkable. Finchatton has, he claims, rewritten his experiences in the form of a conventional ghost story because he cannot face the real truth: "'It is because the realities that are overwhelming him are so monstrous and frightful that he had to transform them into this fairy tale about old skulls and silences in butterfly land, in the hope of getting them down to the dimensions of an hallucination and so presently expelling them from his thoughts'" (68).

Norbert's explanation is that "the Frame of the Present" is breaking down. Animals and unsophisticated people who live wholly in the present remain untouched, he claims, but thinking men have been "probing and piercing into the past and the future" so that "Things that had seemed forgotten for ever have suddenly come back into the very present of our consciousness" (72). The ancestral brute was for a long time hidden from us, but he has always been an inalienable part of man's psyche: "Man, sir, unmasked and disillusioned is the same fearing, snarling, fighting beast he was a hundred thousand years ago" (73). These ideas, of course, draw on Wells's notion of civilization as an acquired factor, but they are linked, too, with psychoanalytic theory.*9 The "probing and piercing" (72) is related by Finchatton to the archaeological digs on the Cainsworth Marshes which are "Tearing up dark secrets" (32), but it is equally applicable to the procedures of psychoanalysis which uncover what has been hidden in the unconscious. In Freudian terms what Norbert is describing is the return of the repressed, the horror of monsters from the Id; in terms of Jungian

In "The Psychology of the Unconscious," which Wells had certainly read because it is one of the Two Essays he draws on for The Science of Life, Jung refers to a number of contemporary evils in a passage which links in interesting ways with The Croquet Player, published in 1936. Jung writes: "The devaluation and repression of so powerful a function as the religious function naturally has serious consequences for the psychology of the individual. The unconscious is prodigiously strengthened by this reflux of libido, and, through its archaic collective contents, begins to exercise a powerful influence on the conscious mind. The period of the Enlightenment closed, as we know, with the horrors of the French Revolution. And at the present time, too, we are once more experiencing this uprising of the unconscious destructive forces of the collective psyche. The result has been mass murder on an unparalleled scale" (7: 92). In a footnote appended in 1942, Jung comments: "Written in 1916; superfluous to remark that it is still true today" (92n).
theory the story draws on the dangers of making contact with the primordial images, "the legacy of ancestral life" (7: 76) which exists in the unconscious of every human being.

But the effectiveness of this story depends on the way in which its ideas are worked out through the different voices of the text and through the interaction of the various narratives. This effect is enhanced by the way in which each of the narrators attempts to reshape events through his story, and by the fact that each of them requires a listener. Finchatton attempts to come to terms with his experiences by re-writing them in the conventional narrative form of the fairy story in which, as Freud points out "the world of reality is left behind from the start, and the animistic system of beliefs is frankly adopted" (PFL 14: 373). Thus he invents the name "Cainsworth," which provides a mythological basis for his sense of horror, and projects his fears on to the natural world: "There crouched the marshes under the moonlight and the long low mists seemed to have stayed their drifting...As if they had paused to listen" (36). But he needs a detached, non-involved listener if this externalization is to be effective. He tells the narrator that he would like to go on talking to him because he finds him "refreshingly unimaginative...Like white paper" (38).

Norbert, the nerve-specialist, purports to be in control of the "realities" he describes because he too has been subject to the fears that obsess his patient and now understands them, but the extent to which he is in control is open to question. Certainly, the narrator finds Norbert's behaviour alarming. He shouts and raves - "There was even a touch of froth on his lips. He paced up and down and talked on and on, in a fine frenzy" (76) - and the narrator attempts to escape from his clutch: "I had an absurd feeling that I was like that wedding guest who was gripped by the Ancient Mariner" (75). Norbert, like Finchatton feels impelled to tell his story; as he says to the narrator, he wants very much to get "a common-sense outside view" of the story that fills Finchatton's mind, then he adds, revealingly, "I want it for my own sake as well as his" (66-67).

The listener, in both instances, is the narrator of The Croquet Player, George Frobisher, whose characteristics are carefully established at the beginning of the story. He is a self-satisfied,
effeminate, somewhat precious young man, who has been brought up by and
still lives with a dominating and strong-minded aunt - "we are the
floating cream of humanity" (6) - and he tells us with evident
satisfaction that his most outstanding achievement is his prowess as a
croquet-player. At first he enjoys Finchatton's story because, despite
his aunt's disapproval, he relishes the eerie: "Her imagination, I think
was killed off long ago, but mine I've made into a domestic pet that I
like to play with. I do not think it will ever claw me seriously; it's
a pussy now which knows where to stop" (38). There is proleptic irony
in this passage, of course, and it places Frobisher firmly in the
category of the Victorian reader described by William Scheick in his
analysis of the story in The Splintering Frame, a reader who is
comfortably distanced by the framing story from the events depicted.
But it does not work out that way. Frobisher's imagination is seized by
Finchatton's story in a way which surprises him. He dwells particularly
on the skull: "It was a face at last and not a skull that watched me out
of that dream story" (65). Although he resents and tries not to listen
to Norbert's tirade, he finds himself affected by it. And he too has to
find a listener. Twice he tells us that he has tried to get what he has
heard into proper perspective by writing it down. At the very beginning
he announces that he has been "infected" by a story told him by "two
very queer individuals":

What they told me was fantastic and unreasonable, but I shall feel
surer about that if I set it down in writing. Moreover I want to
get my story into a shape that will enable one or two sympathetic
readers to reassure me about the purely imaginative quality of
what these two men had to say. (1)

He too has attempted to reshape the narrative in a way he can
accept - he is trying to persuade himself that he has been hypnotized -
but he finds that he cannot detach himself from what he has been told:
"I can no more get rid of it by telling it to you than Finchatton could
get rid of it by telling it to me" (79). It is this aspect of The
Croquet Player that makes me unable to accept Scheick's reading of it.
Scheick argues that the ultimate horror is Frobisher's apparent
unconcern at the very end of the story: "The narrator's final attitude
of disinterest, implying his desire to insulate himself from reality by
living only on the surface of life - he said he was the frame of the story - lingers beyond the end of the text to haunt the reader...." (77). This may have been Wells's overall intention - urging the need for action and the exercise of will - but the discourse of the story does not deliver this message. The narrator's final words to Norbert, that he cannot be doing with "this apocalyptic stuff" and that he is off to play croquet, precede (in the story, as opposed to the discourse) both of his statements about his desire to "expel" the story by telling it - and his failure to achieve this. Thus we know from the very beginning of the story that he has not succeeded in being disinterested. Scheick has ignored the all-important distinction between voice and focalization, between the narrator's present "I" and his past one.

The ancestral memories which have been let loose in the three narrators in this story relate to the primitive fears which Freud claims are the true source of the uncanny. It is man's uncertainty that he has really surmounted the fears which were realities for his primitive forefathers - fears such as the return of the dead and the power of magic - which is, says Freud, the source of the uncanny:

Nowadays we no longer believe in them, we have surmounted these modes of thought; but we do not feel quite sure of our beliefs, and the old ones still exist within us ready to seize upon any confirmation. As soon as anything happens in our lives which seems to confirm the old, discarded beliefs we get a feeling of the uncanny. (PFL 14: 371)

This is what has happened to the three characters in The Croquet Player. Language has created the problem - has enabled man to multiply and retain the memories, histories, traditions which are part of the human race memory - and, Norbert suggests, it is only through language that he may be able to escape to "bind a harder, stronger civilization like steel around the world" (76). But belief in word magic is older than civilization and rational discourse, and the true horror of the story is that language will not solve the problem. What amounts, in Freudian terms, to secondary revision is ineffective, as the successive attempts to exorcise the haunting fears attest.

Mr Blettsworthy on Rampole Island, explores similar ideas within a very different narrative form. The story concerns Arnold Blettsworthy,
who suffers a mental breakdown and takes a sea voyage to recuperate. When the ship is sinking, he is abandoned by the malevolent captain, then rescued by savages and taken to Rampole Island, where he becomes the sacred lunatic. At a crucial moment, when he is being pursued for rescuing and hiding a young woman who belongs to a tribal elder, he "awakes" to discover that he is in New York, where he has been under the care of a psychiatrist since his rescue from the ship. The book ends with Blettsworthy's engagement in the Great War, and his reunion with Lyulph Graves, the friend whose betrayal had precipitated his breakdown.

The book is generally seen as a satirical allegory on modern civilization. The megatheria on the uplands, which neither breed nor die stand for reactionary and out-moded institutions; the tribal practices of the savages: their war-like disposition, their sexual acquisitiveness, their inability to think beyond their traditional way of life, all are seen as a mirror image of the world to which Blettsworthy returns. Linked with this, of course, are the Freudian aspects of the story. The New York psychiatrist interprets Rampole Island as a mixture of dreams and memories, the response of a mind "Very sensitive and divided within itself" (213) to a series of traumatic experiences. Rampole Island can even be seen as a microcosm of the psyche itself and of Blettsworthy's retreat from reality. The savages spend their lives in a sunless gorge (the unconscious) and have a strict taboo upon climbing, or even talking about climbing, towards the sunlight of the uplands (the conscious ego).

Each of these interpretations is illuminating, but they do not exhaust the possibilities and to concentrate on any one of them to the exclusion of the others can be reductive. As one critic has written of Conrad's Heart of Darkness: "It is a critical commonplace to speak of Marlow's journey as symbolic. But it is not easy to say what it is symbolic of" (Gordon, "Dream Symbolism and Literary Symbolism" 26). Mr Blettsworthy on Rampole Island generates a complex dialectic between dreaming and waking, reality and illusion, the rational and the irrational, and a major contributory factor to this dialectic is the

50 See Hammond, An H.G Wells Companion 205-06; Draper, H.G Wells 104-105; Reed, The Natural History of H.G Wells 76-78.
narrative format and language of the book. The dedication, "to the immortal memory of Candide," alerts the reader to the eighteenth century parallels, and chapter headings and summaries remind us of these throughout the book. "Chapter the Third," for instance, "Tells how Mr Blettsworthy found himself among the Savages of Rampole Island and of their Manners and Customs" and so on (135). There are a number of echoes of Voltaire, too, in the characterisation. Arnold Blettsworthy is the Candide figure, brought up by a Panglossian uncle, a country vicar who, despite his calling, is convinced that this is the best of all possible worlds, that all human-beings are good unless oppressed and that "When at last all the world was civilised everyone would be happy" (26).

The language of the book, too, forms part of the dialectic. Blettsworthy is a man for whom language is important. He becomes increasingly disoriented and unsure of his own identity as he finds himself unable to communicate either with the ship's officers or with the Portuguese family at Pernambuco: "My isolation was becoming a paralysing obsession. And after all, what had I to give them? Was I, too, nothing more than a mask?" (93). Alone on the ship, he begins to talk to himself: "with a curious feeling I could not eliminate of a distinction and a difference between the personalities of the talker and the hearer" (123).

It is language, too, which for Blettsworthy defines a civilized society. After he is taken to Rampole Island, he concludes that the language of the savages is a reflection of their tortuous thought processes: "they are misdirected by crazy classifications and encumbered with symbolism, metaphor, metonymy and elaborate falsifications" (147). Their community is, in fact, incapable of direct statement: "It was forbidden even to use the names of many things. They had to be referred to by complicated circumlocution" (148). Thus, the human flesh which forms the staple diet is always referred to as "the Gift of the Friend" (149) and the violent blow which invariably kills offenders is called

51 Catherine Rainwater makes some interesting comments on the language of this book in her essay comparing Wells with Poe, but her primary interest is the relationship with Poe's fictions ("H.G Wells's Revision of Poe: The Undying Fire and Mr Blettsworthy on Rampole Island").
"the Reproof" (148). By contrast, Blettsworthy concludes: "it is the civilised man who thinks simply and clearly....Civilisation is simplification" (147). It is significant, therefore, that in this section of the book, the reader becomes aware of a change in Blettsworthy's syntax which takes the form of increased complexity and elaboration. His usual idiomatic prose gives way to eighteenth century cadences. One passage begins:

Though I display an ungracious disposition in the admission, I will confess I detested all these five sages with whom I was to eat. I had always considered them ugly and frightful and profoundly dangerous, and now that I remembered distinctly that I was Arnold Blettsworthy of Lattmeer and recalled all the serenities and amplitudes of the liberal civilisation out of which I had fallen to these associations, and that I had been cowed to acquiescence in these base conditions, a new indignation and resentment mingled with the hatred and aversion I had hitherto concealed. (153)

And in another, he promises the reader further revelations:

But of the great sloths of the plateau that sometimes even came blundering down into the gorge itself, and of their quite extraordinary biology, and of certain strange superstitions that attached to them, I must tell later. And later on too I will tell of the wars and trade of these savages with their neighbours up the gorge, and of the little old prolific tree sloth which was supposed to be the father of the tribe. I have a little wandered from my story to give this brief description of tribal conditions. (154)

In both of these passages, features such as the long, periodic sentences, the formal and slightly archaic lexis ("gracious disposition," "serenities and amplitudes," "hitherto concealed"); inversions such as "I have a little wandered from my story"; even the speaker's categorisation of himself as "Arnold Blettsworthy of Lattmeer" might well persuade any reader who came upon them out of context that they had been taken from eighteenth century travel-writing.

When he "returns" to New York, Blettsworthy's syntax reverts to its usual pattern, but, significantly, it is only while he believes
himself to be on Rampole Island that he sees his own civilization as ideal – to such an extent that when he is asked to tell the elders about it he is, like Gulliver with the King of Brobdingnag, prepared to distort the truth in order to present a favourable picture:

I launched out upon an impromptu panegyric of civilisation and all that it had done and could do for mankind, mixing the two a little more thoroughly perhaps than the facts justified....I laid stress on the practical benefits accruing from the good moral tone created by fair laws and sound education. I enlarged upon the willing charities, kindly consideration and free services that met the needs of the distressed citizen, so far as there were distressed citizens...I spoke particularly of the cleanness and healthiness of the civilised life, of the happiness and amplitude of a state of affairs in which everyone was educated to confidence in his neighbour and of the abundance of the goods and conveniences our highly organised co-operations made available for all... (159-60)

He falls naturally into the form of expression associated with the Age of Reason and Enlightenment, because this is the way he wants to see his own civilization and because this was, per excellence, the period when language was seen as part of the natural order – as a non-problematic reflection of nature. Language, claimed the Encyclopaedist, Diderot, was in accordance with "the natural logic all men are born with".

52 After Gulliver's initial description of the legislative and judicial institutions of his country had been received with contempt by the King of Brobdingnag, Gulliver, too, "gave to every point a more favourable turn by many degrees than the strictness of truth would allow" (Gulliver's Travels 107). Gulliver's account is very different in content from Blettsworthy's, but the syntax is remarkably similar. He too begins each sentence with the first person singular: "I began my discourse by...."; "I dwelt long upon...."; "I then spoke at large upon...."; "I then descended to...." and so on (103).

53 Quoted by Julia Kristeva in Language: the Unknown (183). Kristeva points out that the eighteenth century was the period when language was regarded as in accordance with natural logic and part of the innate "rightness" of things. Grammatical description was based on the theoretical foundation of sensationalist and empiricist philosophy, and Diderot, she points out, insisted on "the role of 'sensible objects' in the formation of language" (182).
Thus, the eighteenth century echoes in Mr Blettsworthy on Rampole Island are a symptom of the split in Blettsworthy's psyche. They reflect a vision of civilization as he would like it to be. This accords with the explanation he is given by the psychiatrist that his "main personality" had been so wounded and shocked by his early experiences:

that it had taken refuge in the fiction that such rudeness and hardness as had struck me were really only qualities of a remote and secluded corner of the earth. It clung obstinately to the idea that the world of fair illusions it had lost, still existed as the main world of civilisation, out of which I had fallen and to which I would presently return. (218)

But the world to which Blettsworthy returns is not the idealised, illusory Age of Reason of his early youth, but one which, he concludes, is as unpredictable, cruel and war-torn as that of the savages. Like Gulliver after his return from the land of the Houyhnhnms, or Prendick after his experiences with Doctor Moreau, Blettsworthy is unable to adapt or even be sure of what is reality. He is saved from regressing into his fantasy-world by the reappearance of his friend, Lyulph Graves, and the end of the book is modelled on parallels and contrasts with Candide. Graves, says Blettsworthy, has, like himself "been violently ripened by experience and misfortune" (265), to the extent that, like Candide's philosopher companion, Martin, he is now a Stoic. But, adds Blettsworthy, "never in anyone else have I met with such an aggressive Stoicism" (266). Again like Martin, Graves is a Manichean. He accepts that present-day civilization has its evils, and he agrees with Blettsworthy: "The world was Rampole Island, yes, and civilisation a dream" but retreat into a dream-world is not the answer. The main thrust of our lives, he claims, must be to "make that dream reality" (266). Thus, although Graves echoes Candide's solution "that we must cultivate our garden" (Candide 101) - "I am a practical man at bottom, Blettsworthy. We must still follow our petit bonhomme de chemin - whatever load we have on our souls. What does it profit a man if he thinks of the whole world and loses his little business" (264) - he does
not share Martin's conclusion that to work without reasoning is the only way to make life endurable (Candide 101). Graves advocates "creative Stoicism" (287). He urges Blettsworthy to concentrate on the glimpse of the sky which can be see above the gorge in Rampole Island and to work for the enlightenment and intelligent control which constitute "the first slow movement towards a psychologically intelligent life" (286).54

The dialectic set up by the dream-symbolism of Mr Blettsworthy on Rampole Island, then, is more complex than it at first appears. As in Swift and Voltaire, the satire works in two directions. Both the worlds the heroes visit and the worlds to which they return are targets. Blettsworthy's measured, formal language and idealization of a rational civilization are undercut by our knowledge of the fact that both Swift's Gulliver's Travels and Voltaire's Candide — expressed in similar measured tones — are satires on the over-optimism of rationalist philosophy and are, therefore, attacks on their own Rampole Islands.

f) The Oedipal Dream
One of the more important functions of dream in literature is to reveal to the reader repressed wishes and desires, or feelings of which the characters are only partly aware. What is more, dream symbolism can deal with topics which may — for a variety of reasons — be considered unacceptable in explicit terms.55 In Christina Alberta's Father, Wells

54 There are a number of minor parallels between Candide and Mr Blettsworthy on Rampole Island. Wells may well have derived the notion of the savages' pierced ears — a striking feature of Blettsworthy's descriptions of them — from the Oreillons in Chapter 16 of Candide.

55 Unlike actual dreams the purpose of the dream in literature is not to conceal but to reveal, albeit in a veiled and cryptic form. The author, therefore, tends to draw, as Wells does, on public symbols as well as his own associations. But as Freud points out, in his lecture "Symbolism in Dreams," there is a shared knowledge of connections and comparisons which can be employed: "These comparisons are not freshly made on each occasion; they lie ready to hand and are complete, once and for all....in dreams symbols are used almost exclusively for the expression of sexual objects and relations" (PFL 1: 200-201). Freud is at this point talking about actual and not fictional dreams, but, post-Freud, no writer can be assumed to be unaware of his emphasis.
employs the language of dream to provide clues to a mystery at the end of the book. The narrator gives us a clear account of Christina Alberta's reactions to her real father, Wilfred Devizes, at their first meeting: "Devizes was the most wonderful fact in the world. She exploded into love for him" (278). And as she watches him walk away after their first evening together, we see, via the narrator's comments and free indirect discourse, that she is confused by the intensity of her feelings:

"Good night," she whispered and started and looked about her as if she feared that her unspoken thoughts had been audible.

Father. Her father!

So real fathers leave one aglow like this!

He had left her as tense as a violin string on which the bow rests motionless. Now Daddy, who wasn't her father, she would just have hugged and kissed. (304)

In Christina Alberta's Father references to the heroine's supposed father are marked by an insistent use of the possessive pronoun. On thirty one occasions, throughout the book, he is referred to as "my Daddy"/ "your Daddy" / "her Daddy"; and this construction is used by the narrator as well as by the characters. Since Christina Alberta is an adult, independent-minded young woman, the usage sounds slightly odd, as does the use of "daddy" rather than "father". The conventions governing rules of address are matter of usage: "a realization of social meanings" (Olga K. Garnica 156), so any assessment of the significance of the use of "daddy" rather than "father" in the novel would depend on what was customary in families in this class at this period. All of Wells's other grown-up heroines refer to their parent as "father" except in special circumstances - Ann Veronica addresses her father as "Daddy" only when, at the beginning of the book, she is trying "get round" him and at the end when she is anxious to rebuild their relationship, and she never refers to him in this way. For Wells, it would seem, as for our society, the use of "daddy": "serves to reaffirm the psychological and emotional dependency aspects of the parent-child situation" (Garnica 161). In The Bulpington of Blup, Theodore Bulpington, on his way home to his dying father, dwells on fond childhood memories, but when he stand over the corpse, "The memories of Raymond as 'Daddy' which had come to him in the train, were banished in the presence of this immobility" (164). It seems reasonable to assume, then, that for Wells the use of a diminutive form marks a dependency relationship (Garnica 161). Thus the frequency of the usage of "daddy" in Christina Alberta's Father draws attention to the changed relationship between the heroine and Preemby - as we are told, once they had left Woodford Wells, "she was virtually in control of him" (59) - and also conveys Christina Alberta's affectionate lack of respect for him, compared with her awe of Devizes. Thus in a book where the plot hinges on the identity of the eponymous hero, the "daddy"/"father" distinction possesses considerable thematic significance.
How far is Christina Alberta aware of what is happening to her? We can never be sure because after this passage the narrative focalization shifts to Bobby and we are given no further insights. Wells does not want us to know what Christina Alberta is feeling at this stage in the book, merely how her actions and reactions appear to an outside observer.

There are, of course, a number of "symptoms" which Bobby completely misinterprets. To begin with he assumes that she and Devizes are in love with one another because he has a sense of "unfathomed deeps in their relationship, but he did not know where these deeps lay" (378). Similarly, the "pitch of viciousness" (386) of Christina Alberta's jealous response to the woman Devizes introduces as his fiancée puzzles Bobby, but he is, nonetheless, reassured by that lady's arrival:

"Abruptly she had come upon the scene to destroy the triangle that had obsessed Bobby's imagination" (379) - an ironic miscasting of the Freudian Family Romance which is being enacted beneath his nose. Thus Christina Alberta's sudden decision to marry Bobby, followed by her equally sudden retraction on the grounds that "There's no man in the world [she] can marry" (387) leaves him even more confused.

The only real illumination, then, comes from the language of the unconscious conveyed through Christina Alberta's dream, which, significantly, comes immediately after Devizes' psychoanalytic explanation of dreams as a necessary defence. Preemby, he says, has "defended himself against many things by those dreams of his. Very wilful dreams they may have been. Who knows? Necessary protective dreams" (281). Christina Alberta dreams that "She was going about the world with Devizes and they were locked together in such a way that she and he could never look each other, but were always side by side. But also with the sublime incoherence of dreams they were at the same time great ebony images" (282). Preemby appears, tied up by ropes into a white ball, and she and Devizes trample on his "soft, ineffectual body" (283). When "a crowd of vile figures" try to drag him away, Christina Alberta wants desperately to help but is unable to reach out her arms to him "Because she was made of ebony and all of one piece with Devizes" (283). Lambone, who appears as the Sphinx, offers some protection to the little man - "She saw that her Daddy was sheltering between the paws
of the Sphinx, and that the evil men had vanished" (283), but at this point she realises she is dreaming and is troubled by the "revealing absurdity" in her dream. The Sphinx belongs to the ancient Egyptian period and Sargon to the still more ancient Sumerian. When she tries to convey this to the Sphinx-Lambone and he turns his head to answer her, the evil figures return and the little figure of "her Daddy" is dragged away.

The metonymies of the dream\textsuperscript{57} - its condensation and displacements - show it to be an expression of Christina Alberta's anxiety about Preemby, together with her feeling of guilt that she has not done enough to help him. It indicates, too, the repressed knowledge that because of her new-found delight in Devizes she has not even thought enough about him. The strength and force of character which she shares with her real father, in contrast to the softness and vulnerability of Preemby are stressed through the rigidity of the ebony figures - "He was like a bladder. His soft, ineffectual body with her feet upon him, bent and bulged about" (283) - and she is also aware of another thought she has been trying to suppress, the incompatibility of the different worlds, the new and the old, of herself and Preemby: "The dream was going wrong. The periods, the cultures were mixed" (284).\textsuperscript{58} Most important of all, is the displacement by which father and daughter are seen as "sitting stiffly side by side like a Pharaoh and his consort"

\textsuperscript{57} Jakobson claims that any symbolic process, be it intrapersonal or social, involves a competition between metonymic and metaphoric processes: "Thus in an inquiry into the structure of dreams, the decisive question is whether the symbols and the temporal sequences used are based on contiguity (Freud's metonymic 'displacement' and synecdochic 'condensation') or on similarity (Freud's 'identification and symbolism')" \textit{(Language in Literature 113)}.

\textsuperscript{58} This is the point at which Christina Alberta becomes aware of the "revealing absurdity" which tells her that she is dreaming. Freud claims that "absurdity is one of the methods by which the dream-work represents a contradiction" (PFL 4: 564), whilst the dreamer's awareness that s/he is dreaming "is aimed at reducing the importance of what has just been experienced and at making it possible to tolerate what is to follow. It serves to lull a particular agency to sleep which would have every reason at that moment to bestir itself and forbid the continuance of the dream" (4: 629-30).
(282). The clear metonymic association is incest - Pharaohs and their consorts were required to be close blood relations - and the Oedipal aspect of Christina Alberta's repressed feelings for this attractive middle-aged man, the father who has suddenly taken the place of the little daddy whom she has always loved but never respected, is brought out. In both The Outline of History and The Science of Life, Wells stresses that the incest taboos, which are basic to every human society are not instinctive - "they can fail to be established or they can be broken down" - and he explicitly singles out the Pharaohs as one of the few exceptions to these taboos. In the modern world, however, as the dream suggests, this is a riddle for which the Sphinx has no solution.

According to Freud, dreams "show us, in the form of a wish-fulfilment, what wishful impulses have been subject to repression and to what objects the libido withdrawn from the ego has become attached" (PFL 1: 509). Thus the inseparability of the two figures can be seen as wish-fulfilment, but the fact that "he and she could never look at each other, but were always side by side" is a metonymy of the reluctant acceptance by Christina Alberta's conscious self that there is "this invincible barrier between them. They were linked by an invisible tie and they were separated by an unfathomable necessity" (282). But the text makes it clear that it is a reluctant acceptance; Devizes' decision to remarry is bitterly resented and entirely his decision - she tells Bobby, "He just took hold of the situation" (380) - and her final words in the book, delivered "with bitter gusto" in response to Devizes' doctrine that the rational self must subordinate personal impulses and desires in the service of the greater good, are "Oh, damn renunciation!" (402).

I argued earlier in the chapter that what has been described as the unsatisfactory ending of Christina Alberta's Father can be ascribed, in terms of narrative analysis, to the change in perspective in the final chapters of the book. The detailed depiction of Christina

59 In Wells's theory of personality, such a reaction is to be expected: "The life of the individual will begin at a maximum of illusion and personality; the young will be naturally and necessarily more self-conscious and romantic than the old" (The Conquest of Time 63). Christina Alberta's decision need not be seen as final.
Alberta's dream at a key point in the narrative is a contributory factor since it too undercutsthe rational message that the human race is turning to "synthesis and co-operation" (393) which is being propounded so enthusiastically by Lambone and Devizes. This is inevitable because the language of the unconscious is by its very nature diametrically opposed to such notions. Freud insists in The Interpretation of Dreams that despite their enormous variety of content, there is one characteristic that all dreams have in common:

All of them are completely egoistic: the beloved ego appears in all of them, even though it may be disguised. The wishes that are fulfilled in them are invariably the ego's wishes, and if a dream seems to have been provoked by an altruistic interest, we are only being deceived by appearances. (PFL 4: 370)

Wells's use of the dream in Christina Alberta's Father conforms to the rules Freud outlines in his analysis of the fictional dream in "Dream and Delusion in Jensen's Gradiva". The first is that "a dream is invariably related to the events of the day before the dream" (Christina Alberta's dream follows her first meeting with Devizes) and the second declares: "if a belief in the reality of the dream images persists unusually long, so that one cannot tear oneself out of the dream, this is not a mistaken judgement provoked by the vividness of the dream-images, but is a psychical act on its own: it is an assurance, relating to the content of the dream, that something in it is really as one has dreamt it" (PFL 14: 82). Certainly, Christina Alberta wakes up the next morning obsessed by her dream: "But the impression of her Daddy, desolate and broken-hearted and in danger, remained with her, terribly vivid. It clung to her. She got up in the morning, anxious and depressed by it" (284-85). But Freud's "rule" does not only apply to the responses of the character. The effects of the dream colour the reader's response to the novel from this point onwards.

g) Psychoanalysis and Psychosynthesis

As his interest in dreams and the unconscious indicates, Wells was interested in the ideas and findings of psychoanalysis and it is clear that this interest had an influence on the language and form of his fiction. Although he continued to make use of his terminology, Wells
seems to have lost patience with the mysticism of the later Jung, and in the late thirties he began to favour Adler 60 but, as we have seen, Freud is still the figure Wells sees as of primary importance. In 1942, in *The Outlook for Homo Sapiens* Wells again puts him "side by side with Darwin as a significant figure in human enlightenment":

These two men are cardinal not so much on account of the actual elucidations they produced but because of the questions they asked and the method of their questioning. Our knowledge first of our own motives and impulses and then of mass-thought and mass-action, has become beyond comparison more lucid and practical, thanks primarily to the initiatives of Freud. (14)

Nonetheless, despite such accolades, there were aspects of psychoanalytic theory to which Wells was always resistant, and it is evident, too, that as he grew older he seems to have become increasingly ambivalent about some of its basic tenets.

Wells was particularly resistant to one of the fundamental elements of Freud's theory - the idea of infant sexuality and the Oedipus complex - and this is apparent in one of his last novels, *Babes in the Darkling Wood*. This is another exploration of the split personality - the hero is even nicknamed Gemini - which is precipitated by experiences in Poland in the early days of the war. Gemini Twain is taken to a hospital in Sweden, suffering from a mental breakdown. His mother, who has gone to see him, writes to a friend, Robert Kentlake, about the attempts of the psychotherapeutist, Dr Olaf Bjorkminder, to obtain transference - or, in her words, to "acquire an ascendancy" (291) over her son. She is particularly resentful of Bjorkminder's attempt to discover evidence of antagonism between father and son and signs of "an incorrectly repressed incestuous passion" (291) between mother and son. In fact, she concludes, Gemini is "being bored profoundly. He is being badgered to agree to something outside sense and decency" (291).

What is interesting is that Gemini's family situation is, in fact, a case-book study for the Oedipal triangle. Not only does he have a

60 The preference for Adler's version of Freud's theories probably relates to the fact that it fits most readily with Wells's Darwinian/anthropological view of human development. See the argument in the thesis about the inferiority complex (1942 to 1944 191-92).
harsh, authoritarian father and a mother he adores, there has also been
current conflict between his parents over his upbringing - "In his
childhood...he had gone in great fear of his father, and hidden from him
and sheltered behind his mother" (100). Stella, the heroine, witnesses
a confrontation between father and son, which Wells has her analyse in
terms of Atkinson's anthropological theory:

She had read about such hatreds of the old for the young and
between fathers and sons, in books about psychology, but what one
reads about books is never more than half real; here was the
living thing visible and audible, the primordial triangle of
Atkinson's Old Man, his envy and jealousy of his son, and of the
son's possession of the woman. It had suddenly walked out of
anthropology into this cottage and planted itself upon the
hearthrug. (100)

Wells appears, in fact, to have deliberately established an archetypal
"Freudian" situation so that it can then be explained in other terms.

Admittedly, these opinions and explanations emanate from
characters in a work of fiction, but they are endorsed by Kentlake, an
Oxford philosopher who functions throughout the book as the fount of
wisdom. In any case, Wells expresses similar sentiments in Experiment
in Autobiography where he makes it clear that in his view psychoanalytic
theories of infant sexuality may relate to Austrian Jews and Levantines
but they are not applicable to the English or Irish. Then, in what his
son, Anthony West describes as "a weirdly defensive passage" (Aspects of
a Life 172) he announces firmly:

I cannot detect any mother fixation, any Oedipus complex or any of
that stuff in my make-up. My mother's kisses were significant
acts, expressions not caresses. As a small boy I found no more
sexual significance about my always decent and seemly mother than
I did about the chairs and sofa in our parlour" (79).61

61 West finds these statements "breathtaking" and goes on to suggest
that Wells had problems of sexual identity, which stemmed from his mother's
dominance within the family and his father's lack of status. These were
compounded, West suggests, by Wells's discovery that in the outside world,
particularly in cricketing circles, his father possessed considerable
prestige (Aspects of a Life 173-75).
In his autobiography, Wells also announces cheerily: "I had, I have, few 'complexes.' I would almost define education as the prevention of complexes" (621).

Is this defensiveness? Freud would certainly have thought so. He felt that the main difficulty he experienced in promoting his theories came from people's reluctance to accept that "the ego is not master in its own house."62 A number of Wells's critics and biographers have, in fact, offered psychological explanations of his work in relation to his family and upbringing,63 and in H.G Wells and his Critics Ingvald Raknem sees him as "a typically mother-centred child" (183) and suggests that the absence of fathers in Wells's fiction is in itself proof of this.64 More striking, I would suggest, is the emphasis in Wells's fiction on a certain kind of mother. His fiction abounds in mothers who love their children but are so constrained by rigid ideas of conduct - usually connected with sex - that they find it difficult, if not impossible, to establish relationships with them. Remington's mother, in The New

62 This phrase is taken from "A Difficulty in the Path of Psycho-analysis," in which Freud discusses responses like Wells's. He argues that man has over the centuries suffered "three blows" to his self-esteem from scientific advances. The first, from Copernican theory, the second from the researches of Darwin, but the third blow to man's self-love which, says Freud, is probably the most wounding, is psychological: "these two discoveries - that the life of our sexual instincts cannot be wholly tamed, and that mental processes are in themselves unconscious and only reach the ego and come under its control through incomplete and untrustworthy perceptions - these two discoveries amount to a statement that the ego is not master in its own house....No wonder, then, that the ego does not look favourably upon psychoanalysis and obstinately refuses to believe in it" (SE 17: 149).

63 Brome, H.G Wells 223. The Mackenzies and Anthony West base their biographies on psychological assumptions about Wells's life.

64 Raknem claims: "If a father is introduced at all he is either a humbug, a laughing-stock, a failure or otherwise insignificant. Sometimes he simply disappears. On many occasions, he dies, leaving his wife to bring up their child, who is a boy" (H.G Wells and his Critics 183). In a footnote (193n) Raknem lists eleven examples of absent fathers, but many of these relate to minor or peripheral characters, and Theodore Bulpington (one of the examples cited) is an adult when his father dies so can scarcely be said to have been brought up by his mother. Given that Wells wrote fifty novels, this does not seem a very convincing total.
Machiavelli is typical. Looking back, Remington finds it difficult to understand how his mother could have been so unresponsive to his father, "the most lovable of weak spasmodic men": "But my mother had been trained in a hard and narrow system that made evil out of many things not in the least evil, and inculcated neither kindliness or charity" (58). In Tono-Bungay, the words "hardness" and "severity" (74) characterize George Ponderevo's recollections of his mother; only later does he begin to understand why there were barriers between them: "Poor proud, habitual, sternly narrow soul! poor difficult and misunderstanding son!" (72)

Many mothers in Wells's novels find it impossible to talk to their children about sexual matters, and this is an area where he lays great emphasis on the linguistic construction of the subject. George Ponderevo recalls that he had never been told anything frankly and directly, all he learned in such matters came "obscurely, indefinitely, perplexingly" (200). The situation is even worse for daughters. George ascribes the failure of his marriage to the fact that "the make-up of Marion's mind in the matter was an equally irrational affair":

Her training had been one not simply of silences, but suppressions. An enormous force of suggestion had so shaped her that the intense natural fastidiousness of girlhood had developed into an absolute perversion of instinct. For all that was cardinal in this essential business of life she had but one inseparable epithet - "horrid." (200-201)

In these early novels, of course, Wells is writing about Victorian constraints, of a world in which, as Sarnac records in The Dream, there was "profoundest ignorance of the body" and people "even bore children by accident" (72). But similar attitudes are evident in the novels of the twenties and thirties. Christina Alberta remembers her mother as "a concentrated incarnate 'Don't'" (Christina Alberta's Father 278) and Stella Kentlake's mother in Babes in the Darkling Wood is perhaps the most inhibited of all. Brought up by aunts who avoid the subject so far as possible - "Not very much was said, but much was implied" (150) - she has "a powerful, negative preoccupation with sex" (162). She wants desperately to warn her daughter about the dangers of men and is anxious to discover the extent of her experience but "so great was her
agoraphobia of plain language that she was no more capable of putting such a question directly than of playing matador in a bull-fight, naked before ten thousand people" (160).

There seems little point in speculating about Wells's unconscious attitudes in these matters and no human being, of course, can be expected to be in touch with his or her own unconscious. In any case, it is possible to trace Wells's mixed feelings about psychoanalysis to two very conscious elements in his thinking. One is his commitment to biological science and the other his acceptance of William James's psychological theories, which, as I argued in Chapter One, influenced his writing throughout his life.

As a biologist, Wells shows a marked preference for those theories about mental processes which can be related to physiological functions, and this is reflected in his use of language. In The Science of Life, Wells claims that the centuries-old philosophical distinction between mind and body survives as a linguistic fiction:

For many centuries a very emphatic dualism has ruled human thought and impressed itself upon the language. We still talk of body, soul and spirit; we put physical and psychic into antagonism and treat them habitually as systems of reality separable not merely in thought but in fact (763).

He argues for a material view of consciousness as "how the organism experiences the brain happenings, which are all that the external observer could detect with the methods of physical science" (763). This probably accounts for the fact that Wells often uses the word "brain" where the most general usage would be "mind." This is noticeable in a number of his novels, and in Experiment in Autobiography which is subtitled "Discoveries and Conclusions of a Very Ordinary Brain". Here he makes an analysis of his personality in terms of the physical constitution of his brain - "the quality of its cells, fibres and bloodvessels" (31) - and uses the word "experiment" to

65 This is particularly noticeable in The Bulpington of Blup, where de-personalised terms like "brain-cortex" (25) emphasise the split in Theodore's personality, and references to "their common grey matter" (65) remind the reader of the co-existence of Theodore and the various manifestations of the Bulpington of Blup.
underline the scientific nature of his undertaking. Throughout his autobiography, Wells draws metaphors from the terms and procedures of objective science. Writing an autobiography, for instance, is like attempting to "dissect the dead rabbit of my former self," and he sees this youthful self as a "specimen of human life, pickled now in correspondence and ineffaceable memories for forty years" (424). These metaphors indicate a profound difference between Wells and Freud. For Wells, the past self is dead, for Freud, it is eternally latent.

It is not surprising, therefore, that in his later work Wells leans more towards the Behaviourist theories of psychology, because they draw their conclusions only from observable behaviour. In The Science of Life, he had maintained that "If consciousness exists it is, we hold, as worthy of scientific study as any other phenomenon. It is as legitimate to use subjective evidence as objective and to deal with subjective and objective realities on a common monistic footing" (787). In the passages about psychoanalysis, consciousness is contrasted with the unconscious, but by the late 'thirties, Wells came increasingly to favour the term "sub-conscious", explicitly rejected by Freud as "incorrect and misleading" (PFL 11: 172) to "unconscious", and in a letter responding to The Conquest of Time, C.P Snow queries this usage: "Why 'sub-conscious" instead of 'unconscious', which is, of course, the technical psychoanalytical term? Is it that you think they claim too much, and exaggerate the sharpness of division between 'conscious' and 'unconscious'? If so, I should agree" (Letter December 1941, Wells Archive). In his Thesis Wells is again concerned with consciousness, but this time his stance is Behaviourist. He objects to the term "psycho-analysis" because "It implies an original mental unity which can undergo an analytical process" (169) and proposes a new term, "psycho-synthesis," which implies the inherently divided nature of the self. Psycho-synthesist theories, therefore, are based on the premise that each human-being is an organism, a "neurosensitive apparatus," and the aberrant drives and impulses which, from a psychoanalytic view, are

66 The Editor of the Penguin Freud Library points out that although in his very early writings Freud sometimes used "subconscious", "he disrecommends the term as early as in The Interpretation of Dreams (1900)" (PFL 11: 172n).
driven down into the unconscious are viewed from the opposing perspective as "merely a multitude of reaction systems out of contact with the main directive system" (42-44 172).

These ideas are worked out in fictional form in Babes in the Darkling Wood, which appeared in 1940, two years before Wells submitted his doctoral thesis. Wells invents a psychologist, Cottenham C. Bower, of Radnor State University, Georgia, whose theories, as set out in his book, The Expansion of Sex, are expounded - at considerable length - on three separate occasions in the novel. It is significant that Cottenham C. Bower is not a psychologist but a biologist - which accounts, says Gemini, for "his freshness of approach" (307) - and that his claims not only challenge some of the central premises of psychoanalytic theory, they also fit in very conveniently with Wells's hopes for mankind's future development. Bower's theories challenge Freud's notion of the primacy of the sex drive.

From his Behaviourist/biological point of view the sex drive is a by-product of a developed cerebellum which has played an essential role in man's evolutionary and cultural development, but is now a nuisance; had man acquired a rutting season like most animals, Bower argues, life would be much simpler: "For the rest of the time we should do our work, make our machines, subdue the earth to our needs, in sexless tranquility" (79). Although Bower does not reach conclusions - his book, says Gemini, is "a scientific treatise" (80) - the clear implication is that in the course of time the processes of natural selection will ensure that this nuisance is dispensed with.

In fact, Gemini explains, Bower "treats the psychoanalysts as though they were half-way back to the Middle Ages" (175) and dismisses their terminology as "a convenient mythology of exploration that has served its purpose and must now be abandoned" (175). After his breakdown, Gemini is removed from the care of the Freudian Dr Bjorkminder, and is restored to health by Robert Kentlake through the methods of psychosynthesis, as propounded by Bower. These, Kentlake

67 It may have been this aspect of the novel which led Shaw to describe it, in a letter to Wells, as "really an exhaustive letter to me" (Letter April 15 1941, Wells Archive). The problem of reconciling the sex drive with intellectual pursuits and the demands of work is one which Wells returns to frequently in his fiction and non-fiction and one which he seems never to have resolved. See The Anatomy of Frustration 249-50.
explains, are diametrically opposed to psychoanalysis because they rely on the patient's conscious determination: "You clear up and disentangle his misconceptions about himself and then hand him back to himself for treatment" (311-12).

Whatever the merits of these ideas in psychological terms, it is interesting to note that in both *Babes in the Darkling Wood* and in the thesis the imagery used to describe the psyche changes significantly. Ten years earlier, in *The Science of Life*, Wells had deplored the fact that he found himself impelled, when writing about psychoanalysis, to use unacceptable metaphors such as "parts of the mind," "superficial" and "deep," "levels" and "regions" and so on, when, he claims, "Consciousness as consciousness seems to be non-spatial and the Unconscious is of the same nature" (796). Behaviourism, on the other hand, suggests metaphors which Wells finds more congenial because they relate to manageable space. In the thesis he contrasts the differing explanations of aberrant drives and impulses: "The psycho-analyst says they are down below in the dungeon; the Behaviourist says they are at large outside" (172) What is excluded from the persona "stirs and thrusts, says the psycho-analyst, beneath the conscious life. It skulks and agitates, says the Behaviourist, on the edge of the waking life" (173). Clearly, what is "down there" is out of reach; its stirrings may have considerable effect on the ego, but they are uncontrollable by an exercise of will. The preferred terms are still spatial, of course, but what is "skulking" outside can be recognised and dealt with if it manages to obtain entry - as Wells expresses it, in an appropriately forceful image: "the old persona elbows its way back to recover control" (173). The ego is master in its own house (see note 62).

Clearly, if human-beings are to co-operate and work together to bring about the world state, such control is necessary. William James's approach to the psyche is based on an evolutionary view of human development, and his view of the advance of the intellect by means of a higher form of reasoning is far more in accord with Wells's plans for the creative world state. As Wells points out in *The Science of Life*, evolution itself is not, so far as we know, teleological, but with the emergence of man, the picture changes: "Evolution does in part become purposeful. It has at least the possibility of becoming
purposeful....Human purpose is one of the achievements of Evolution" (387).

In the introduction to a recent collection of writings by Gertrude Stein, Elizabeth Sprigge describes the influence of William James upon Stein, who attended his post-graduate lectures when she was a student at Radcliffe, and comments: "It would be difficult to overrate William James's influence upon Gertrude Stein. The conscious, just before it was superseded, through the influence of Freud, by the unconscious - although never for Gertrude Stein - was the main concern of thinking people, and she was a thinker" (Look At Me Now and Here I Am 14). The same could be said for Wells. Psychoanalytic theory, on the other hand, with its stress on the private and the personal, and its emphasis on the irrational aspects of the human psyche (8) was far less appealing to Wells's aspirations for human co-operation on a world scale. Nonetheless, he was fascinated by the insights it offered, and the tension between what he wanted to believe and what he found it difficult to deny produced interesting effects in the language and form of his later fiction.

Richard Wollheim argues that Freud believed in reason: "'In the long run,' he wrote, in The Future of an Illusion, 'nothing can withstand reason and experience.' He believed, that is, that the mind of a man is so attuned that it is swayed by arguments and rational considerations once it listens to them. But just as arguments and rational considerations have such power over him, he will, when comfort demands it, do all he can not to listen to them. Freud's life work, we might say, was a research into the deafness of the mind. Freud was a rationalist but not an optimist. He thought that ultimately reason will prevail, but he saw no reason to formulate an estimate when the ultimate would come about, or what might happen first" (Freud 234). Wells was too impatient for such a philosophy.
Chapter 5

Forms and Formations: The Characteristics of Wells's Style

There is always a complex interrelationship between any piece of writing, the society in which it is produced and the readership which receives it. This is particularly true of prose fiction since, as Mikhail Bakhtin points out: "the art of prose is close to a conception of languages as historically concrete and living things" (Dialogism 331). This view of language as ineluctably social underlies Raymond Williams's claim in The Politics of Modernism that although "the most fundamental cultural history is always a history of forms" (83), forms can never be divorced from "formations", the cultural and social groupings which produce and assess literature. Williams maintains that formal analysis can help us define and understand various kinds of texts and literary tendencies "but only if it is firmly grounded in formational analysis" (79). These concepts of the relationship between language and cultural formation are particularly useful in analysing Wells's style.

Since Wells's writing career coincided with the development of Modernism, his writing cannot fail to have been affected by the changes in taste and critical assessment which accompanied the movement - changes which have had a lasting effect not only on the way the public has seen Wells but also on the way he saw himself. In the first part of the chapter, therefore, the emphasis is on cultural formations, the historically determined literary and linguistic context within which Wells was writing. The remainder of the chapter focuses on forms, the aspects of Wells's style which constitute its characteristic features, examined in relation to this context. I shall suggest that the dispute between Henry James and Wells about the form and purpose of the novel was even more fundamental than has so far been suggested because it was

1 As John Batchelor points out, Wells must have been particularly incensed to find himself "being written off by the intelligent young" during the 1920s (H.G Wells 127). In The Strange Necessity, published in 1928, Rebecca West groups Wells with Bennett, Galsworthy and Shaw (in a passage couched in the past tense) as Uncles who, although remembered with affection, belong nonetheless to a past generation (199-200).
based on different conceptions of language. This divergence was of considerable importance because subsequent developments in Modernist fiction and New Criticism were based on assumptions akin to—and in part derived from—James’s view. Central to the argument of this chapter, then, is the claim that Wells’s theory of language, particularly his lasting adherence to the Nominalist–Realist distinction and to William James’s notion of higher reasoning (discussed in Chapter One) provide a key to understanding both Wells’s practice as a writer, and his relation to the Modernist aesthetic.

I FORMATIONS
a) Wells, Henry James and Language
Wells’s quarrel with Henry James presaged, and to some extent encapsulated, the changes in literary sensibility which contributed to the decline in Wells’s reputation as a literary figure. The quarrel itself has been discussed at length, and for many years it was scarcely questioned that James was in the right. Leon Edel and Gordon Ray’s lengthy introduction to Henry James and H.G Wells—a book comprised of the articles and letters that contributed to the quarrel—purports to be even-handed but nevertheless suggests that Wells’s "soaring imagination" fails to compensate for the fact that he "was yet limited and earth-bound when it came to art" (39); "the final word," they conclude, "remains with the old master of Rye and Chelsea" (40). Commenting in 1970 on "the real significance" of the quarrel between

2 See Robert Bloom, The Anatomy of Egotism, Chapter 1; Alfred Borrello, H.G Wells: Author in Agony, Chapter 6; Vincent Brome, Six Studies in Quarrelling, Chapter 3; Nicholas Delbanco, Group Portrait, Chapter 4; John Hammond, H.G Wells and the Modern Novel, Chapter 2; Norman and Jeanne Mackenzie, The Time Traveller 276–282; Patrick Parrinder, The Critical Heritage, Introduction; David Smith, Desperately Mortal, Chapter 7; and, for an overtly partisan view, Anthony West, Aspects of a Life, Chapter 3. Since these issues of controversy between Wells and James have already been debated in detail and at length by so many critics, there seems little point in going over the same ground in this chapter. In any case, discussions of these matters necessarily involve controversial value judgements which will, in turn, depend upon the critical presuppositions and aesthetic preferences of the writer concerned. In a study concerned with Wells’s writing it seems more productive to consider the theoretical basis of the controversy than to takes sides on the issues raised by it.
Wells and James, Raymond Williams writes, with particular reference to this piece:

You've only to read the introduction to their exchanges - a modern introduction, by critical minds set firmly on one side of the argument, a set that goes almost too deep to be noticed - you've only to notice the tones, the terms, their familiarity in contemporary discussion, to see how central this difference is.

(The English Novel 103)

More recently, critics sympathetic to Wells have sought in a variety of ways to defend his point of view. John Batchelor, for instance, argues that Wells had a far better case than has generally been supposed, that he had, in fact, "a coherent and intellectually defensible theory of the novel which he could have pressed much more vigorously and aggressively and that he was outwitted by the patrician dignity and elaborate courtesy of his adversary" (H.G Wells 113).

What has not so far been brought out, however, is the extent to which this debate is grounded on differing and irreconcilable ideas about language. The two writers stand on opposite sides of a fundamental disagreement about the ways in which the language of literature relates to experience; ultimately they hold opposing views on the nature of meaning itself, and this in itself ensures that they would never have been able to agree on such issues as the social function of literature, whether or not is possible - or desirable - to prescribe rules for the novel, what these rules should be, and so on. As Wells recalls in his autobiography, any conversation with James about his fiction soon "spread out from that starting point to a far-reaching tentacular discussion of what a novel should be and do" (489). I would, therefore, endorse Michael Draper's conclusion that to take sides in the dispute is both unnecessary and unproductive: "Before James and Wells

3 In Edel and Ray's introduction to Henry James and H.G Wells we are told that "with his finely tuned literary perceptions and his subtle mind," James "cut through to the core of each work" in his criticisms of Wells's novels, that he "recognised" (and what is "recognised" is, in the opinion of the speaker, true) the younger writer's faults, and so on. Metaphors of depth and profundity are reserved for James - he has a "deep psychological awareness" (25), "is devoted wholly to fathoming and recreating human experience" (39) - whilst Wells is represented as "unconcerned with aesthetic matters" (39).
fell out they were both artists, but artists of a different sort" (118).

This fundamental difference can best be explained in terms of Wells's own favourite distinction between Realism and Nominalism. Henry James, follower of Balzac and Flaubert, is the supreme Realist in both the nineteenth century "classic Realist" sense and the Scholastic sense. He does not appear to doubt the existence of a reality "out there" which can be represented in words. In the handwritten draft of a letter to Herbert Read in 1943 which seeks to explain "the full story" of the dispute, Wells writes of James: "he had a peculiar dislike for any gusto about reality as such"; this is crossed out and replaced by "He had a cultivated aloofness from 'vulgarity'." Further on in the paragraph Wells adds: "His imagination lived in a sublimated world." These three statements, I would suggest, constitute an attempt to define, thirty years after the quarrel, the difference between the ideal reality which James sought to attain through art, and the shifting world of unique everyday particulars which for Wells comprised "reality as such" (Letter, July 30 1943 Wells Archive). Not only does James accept his view of external reality, he is at the same time convinced that an ideal form of literary representation is achievable. This can be demonstrated by an analysis of James's view of the creative process as revealed in his critical essays. The Prefaces written for the 1907 New York edition of his works 4 are particularly revealing because, as Patrick Parrinder suggests in his study of English criticism in relation to literary culture, Authors and Authority, it is these Prefaces which "transmitted the 'lesson of the master' to posterity" (160). This encapsulation of James's aesthetic of the novel is based on an unstated but firmly held assumption about language.

The major and unbridgeable difference between Wells and James is that for the former all human beings "see the world through a mist of words" (What are we to Do with our Lives? 15) whilst the latter clearly believes in an unmediated experience which can be expressed in words—precisely the reverse, in fact, of the way most critics have constructed their opposition. These conflicting views of language are of

4 All references to the 1907 Prefaces are taken from The Art of the Novel, edited by R.P Blackmur.
fundamental importance because judgements about the function of literature and the position of the artist in society depend on them. James lays great emphasis on the importance of the author's own experience of the world as the source of his material. In his Preface to The American, the distinction between romance and realism is defined in experiential terms: "The real," he writes, "represents to my perception the things we cannot possibly not know, sooner of later, in one way or another; it being but one of the accidents of our hampered state, and one of the incidents of their quantity and number, that particular instances have not yet come our way" (The Art of the Novel 31). The term "romantic", in contrast, stands for all the things that, with all the facilities in the world, we can never directly know: "the things that can reach us only through the beautiful circuit and subterfuge of our thought and our desire" (32). Although James does not explicitly endorse one mode of expression above the other, the implication is that realism is the more significant because it relates to the writer's direct apprehension of the world. Indeed, in the realist novel the author's own experience is crucial because "the balloon of experience is in fact of course tied to the earth" (33); the "romancer" may cut the rope but the novelist must ensure that he remains tethered to the real (33-34). The novelist's subjects, his vision, James claims, come out of his experience of life - his observations and his perceptions - and to that extent cannot be a matter of free choice:

one never really chooses one's general range of vision - the experience from which ideas and themes and suggestions spring: this proves ever what it has had to be, this is one with the very turn one's life has taken; so that whatever it "gives," whatever it makes us feel and think of, we regard as very much imposed and inevitable. (Preface to Lady Barberina 201)

James points out in the letter he sent to Wells after reading Boon, that the attack made in the book on his choice of subject matter was

5 James writes in this letter that he has tried to see his work from other perspectives, but "one can't keep it up - one has to fall back on one's sense of one's own good parts - one's own sense....For I should otherwise seem to forget what it is that my poetic and my appeal to experience rest upon. They rest upon my measure of fulness - fulness of life and the projection" (Henry James and H.G Wells 262).
unfair for this very reason, because, like all other writers he has only his own perspective and experience to draw on.

But experience is not merely what happens to us, it is also our estimate of it. It is, as James puts it: "our apprehension and our measure of what happens to us as social creatures - any intelligent report of which has to be based on that apprehension" (64-65). Thus it is not a matter of passive reception: "The thing of profit is to have your experience - to recognise it and understand it, and for this almost any will do; there being surely no absolute ideal about it beyond getting from it all it has to give" (201). If this is to happen, the author must, like the characters James favours as his "centres of consciousness", possess the power to be "finely aware and richly responsible" (62), must, in fact, like the Prince in The Golden Bowl, have "a consciousness highly susceptible of registration" (329). What is most important, therefore, is that the artist should receive from his experience "some direct impression or perception of life" (45), and in the Preface to The Princess Casamassima, thinking back thirty years to the time of his first arrival in London as an adult, James recalls "the practice of never missing an opportunity to add a drop, however small, to the bucket of my impressions or to renew my sense of being able to dip into it" (77).

These two terms, "experience" and "impressions", recur throughout James's critical writing because, as Parrinder argues: "Realism for James, unlike George Eliot, is a subjective entity. A novel is a personal impression of life, so that the novelist aims at the 'air of reality (solidity of specification)', not the concreteness of the thing itself" (Authors and Authority 161). Subjectivity, however, does not imply solipsism. As Parrinder points out, since for James everything depends on the "fine intelligence" of the writer himself, if the "receptor" is sufficiently sensitive and finely attuned, his perceptions will be reliable. Thus James, who is confident of his own receptivity, has no doubts about the veracity and accuracy of his impressions of the "real" world. In 1904, in the Preface to The American Scene, which gives an account of his first visit to America for twenty years, James lays great stress on the reliability of his responses: "I would take my stand on my gathered impressions...I would in fact go to the stake for them"
Experience, then, provides the subject-matter, but for James the major consideration is not the nature nor even the importance of the experience itself, but what the writer makes of it. Paradoxically, however, although James's later prefaces and essays are concerned above all with ways of treating the subject, and therefore, by implication, with the process of writing, and although he refers constantly to "expression", there is scarcely any attention given to discourse or language per se, nor is there any discussion of the problems of signification. This, of course, is in marked contrast to Wells, who was fascinated by the powers and limitations of language as a signifying system. Instead of addressing language directly in the 1907 Prefaces, James uses a number of different images for "the art of composition," but the dominant analogy is with painting. The novelist is frequently referred to as a "painter of life"—in a letter of 1911, James dubs Wells "the most masterful prose-painter of [his] generation" (Henry James and H.G. Wells 127)—and in an early essay, "The Art of Fiction", James states unequivocally:

the analogy between the art of the painter and the art of the novelist is, so far as I am able to see, complete. Their inspiration is the same, their process (allowing for the difference of the vehicle), is the same, their success is the same. They may learn from each other, they may explain and sustain each other. Their cause is the same, and the honour of one is the honour of the other. (The House of Fiction 25)

Wells, however, was not prepared to "allow for the difference of the vehicle" without considerable qualification. In Boon, George Boon

6 In the 1907 Prefaces James is fond of culinary images (230, 233); images drawn from architecture and construction (55, 48); hunting metaphors (311, 84), whilst throughout the Prefaces narrative techniques are described in terms of painting: "foreshortening", "shades" and "tones". Keating points out in The Haunted Study, that in the 1890s this was a favoured analogy amongst writers. It relates, he suggests, to the desire to separate the writing of novels from any "degrading connection with popular entertainment" and to demonstrate that it was a true artistic activity: "In the campaign to attain artistic respectability, the painter was the novelist's natural ally and the role he was called upon to play in fiction was often one of surrogacy" (80). Many of James's characters are painters.
points to the linear nature of the novel form and questions James's insistence on homogeneity and unity of perspective which is derived from the pictorial analogy: "Why should a book have that? For a picture it's reasonable, because you have to see it all at once. But there's no need to see a book all at once. It's like wanting to have a county done in one style and period of architecture. It's like insisting that a walking tour must stick to one valley...." (Boon 102). In any case, as Wells argues in Experiment in Autobiography, even if the metaphor be accepted, James is concerned with only one kind of picture, and "the novel of completely consistent characterization arranged beautifully in a story and painted deep and round and solid, no more exhausts the possibilities of the novel, than the art of Velasquez exhausts the possibilities of the painted picture" (493). For Wells there are times when a sketch is a more appropriate form. James, then, does not discuss language directly in his later critical writing, and when he does examine expression his favourite terms are "render" and the various lexemes of "represent" — words which link both with the pictorial metaphor and with his repeated injunction to the author to "Dramatise".

The way in which the subject is represented is, of course, supremely important because for James, as for Flaubert, there is only one perfect way of expressing anything.7 Significantly, this is an aspect of James which Wells stresses in Boon, where Mr Blandish, a character "pretty completely taken from the James ideal," believes that "in speech and still more in writing there was an inevitable right word" (109). There is evidence for this belief throughout James's critical writing, particularly in the 1907 Prefaces, because in preparing his work for the new edition he had been obliged to reread and reassess his fiction, some of which had been written over thirty years earlier. In the Preface to Roderick Hudson, his first published novel, James compares his task with that of a painter who returns to an old picture and has to decide what measures he should take to restore its "pictorial tone" (10). Like the painter, he decides, the literary artist should

7 Flaubert's letters often record, James writes: "that it has taken him three days to arrive at one right sentence, tested by the pitch of his ideal of the right for the suggestion aimed at" (House of Fiction 208).
first make use of a "wet sponge" to see "when the moistened canvas does
obscurly flush and when resort to the varnish bottle is thereby
immediately indicated" (12). When such indications have been received,
he has, he announces "nowhere scrupled to rewrite a sentence or a
passage on judging it susceptible to a better turn" (12).

But how can this be equated with James's conviction that the
artist's vision must relate to the direct impressions received from his
own experience? As he tells us, the first question the writer must ask
himself when he addresses any proposed subject is "is it valid, in a
word, is it genuine, is it sincere, the result of some direct impression
or perception of life?" (45). James addresses this problem in the
Preface to The Golden Bowl. "To revise," he claims, "is to see, or to
look over again - which means in the case of a written thing neither
more nor less than to re-read it" (338-39), and for James re-reading is
inseparable from re-writing. In one of his letters to Wells he
explains, somewhat tongue-in-cheek:

...my sole and single way of perusing the fiction of Another is to
write it over even when most immortal - as I go. Write it over, I
mean, re-compose it, in the light of my own high sense of
propriety and with immense refinements and embellishments. I am
so good in these cases as to accept the subject tel quel - to take
it over whole and make the best of it. (Edel and Ray 81-82)

So far as his own writing is concerned, James declares in the Preface
that to re-read is first of all to relive the experience, to possess
again the impression and the subsequent vision which led to the book's
creation:8

What re-writing might be was to remain - it has remained for me to
this hour - a mystery. On the other hand the act of seeing it
again, caused whatever I looked at on any page to flower before me

8 In his recent book, Henry James and Revision, Philip Horne
quotes from a notebook entry of 1905 in which James records: "Everything
sinks in: nothing is lost; everything abides and fertilizes and renews
its golden promise...." (59). Throughout the 1907 Prefaces, James shows
a capacity for total recall, even after thirty years, of the exact
moment when he received his donnée, the impression which gave him the
subject of a book. He also gives precise details of his response at the
time, of the exact place and circumstances in which the book was written
and so on.
as into the only terms that honourably expressed it; and the "revised" element in the present Edition is accordingly these terms, these rigid conditions of re-perusal, registered; so many close notes, as who should say, on the particular vision of the matter itself that experience had at last made the only possible one. (Preface to The Golden Bowl 339) [My italics]

It is not, then, that the impression or vision has changed, but that his accumulated experiences as a writer - "these intenser lights of experience" (339), as he puts it - have given him the power to render that impression in a way which approximates more closely to the best, the only perfect way. He wishes he could record more precisely "the history...of the growth of the immense array of terms, perceptual and expressional, that, after the way I have indicated, in sentence, passage and page, simply looked over the heads of the standing terms - or perhaps rather, like alert winged creatures, perched on those diminished summits and aspired to clearer air" (339). The implication of this metaphor appears to be that the better, more perfect forms of expression were there, had always been there, ready and waiting all the time, but that his younger, less enlightened self had been unable to see them. In Roderick Hudson, he feels, despite the re-writing: "The essence of the matter is wholly unaltered - save for seeming in places, I think, a little better brought out" (Letters I I 56-57). By this account, then, the writer is seen as striving to match copy to model, appearance to reality, event to ideal, and the perfect fusion of content and form is for James the Idea itself.

The important point is that although this perfect fusion is elusive, certainly, and attained only as the result of strenuous, unremitting effort on the part of the artist, it is nonetheless seen as

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9 Horne quotes this passage and comments: "This is striking, but his indirect way of putting it may seem irresponsible or evasive. After all, James must have had something to do with it" (63). He suggests that it is a characteristic of James's later style that active human verbs are applied to impersonal subjects, especially in relation to imaginative processes. But this explanation does not escape the implication in this passage that the terms have always been there - whether it be in the mind of the author or somewhere else.
ultimately attainable, and in the Preface to The Golden Bowl, in one of his most explicitly Platonic passages, James speaks of "The term that superlatively, that finally 'renders,'" as "a flower that blooms by a beautiful law of its own (the fiftieth part of a second often so sufficing it) in the very heart of the sheaf" (342). Revision, then, seems to be part of this search for the Ideal. Balzac is praised as a writer who gave considerable attention to revision, who "re-assaulted by supersessive terms, re-penetrated by finer channels, never had on the one hand seen or said all or had on the other ceased to press forward" (343), and whose prose, in consequence of these efforts, gives us "our greatest exhibition of felt finalities, our richest and hugest creation of imaginative prose" (343). When, and only when, perfect expression is achieved, can any work be considered finished, or to use James's favourite term, "done". Only then can a text be considered to have "fixed" its subject. As James writes to Hugh Walpole: "Form alone takes, and holds and preserves substance" (A Modernist Reader 32).

It is, then, by means of this achievement of form, this fusion of content and expression, that art "makes life, makes interest, makes importance, for our consideration and application of these things", as James writes in his last letter to Wells (Henry James and H.G Wells 267). Wells replied:

I don't clearly understand your concluding phrases - which shows no doubt how completely they define our difference. When you say

10 The idea of perfect fusion of expression and content is evoked in reverse by the metaphor James uses to describe a literary text which is far from achieving it - "loose". The use of the first person in a long piece of writing, for instance, is "foresdoomed to looseness" (320); Thackeray's and Tolstoy's books have life but are nonetheless "loose baggy monsters" in artistic terms (84); Hugh Walpole is admonished for having failed to ensure that his expression is "tight and in close quarters (of discrimination, of specification) with its subject. It remains loose and far" (A Modernist Reader 31).

11 The statement: "art makes life, makes interest, makes importance" is seen by many critics as an encapsulation of James's aesthetic philosophy. It has been quoted extensively, and Leon Edel takes it as the epigraph for the last volume of his biography, Henry James, the Master 1901-1916.
"it is art that makes life, makes interest, makes importance," I can only read sense into it by assuming that you are using "art" for every conscious human activity. I use the word for a research and attainment that is technical and special. (267) [my italics]

Wells is surely right in his reading of the implication of James's assertion: it does go to the heart of the difference between them. For Wells, language is always a social fact. He never deviates from his view that language is the acquired factor which - because it shapes human-beings, both psychologically and as social creatures - has made civilization possible. Literature has an important part to play in this process, but its language cannot be separated out as something special, as something apart from, let alone prior to, ordinary human concerns. James's assertion, on the other hand, assumes a special use of language, a language available only to the literary artist.12 There was no way that a self-avowed nominalist like Wells could have accepted the view of language implied in James's statement. For him language mediates - and to that extent creates - reality, in a Saussurean sense. In fact, had James written that language makes life, makes interest and so on, it is hard to see how Wells could have disagreed with him. After all, this is what he himself had been saying in Mankind in the Making and First and Last Things, and was at that period about to explore in global and historical terms in The Outline of History.

A comparison of James's 1907 Prefaces and the introductions to the 1924 Atlantic Edition of Wells's fiction reveals the theoretical basis of their dispute. In his General Introduction, Wells clearly has

12 A passage from James's essay on Flaubert makes it clear that when he writes that it is art that makes life, he is referring to a particular kind of literary expression. Flaubert, writes James, was aware "that beauty comes with expression, that expression is creation, that it makes reality" but, he adds, this occurs "only in the degree to which it is, exquisitely, expression..." (House of Fiction 213). Thus, it is not language which creates reality, but poetic or literary language which recreates it in such a way that "we move in literature through a world of different values and relations, a blest world in which we know nothing except by style, but in which also everything is saved by it and in which the image is thus always superior to the thing itself" (213) - the literary copy can approach closer to the Idea (the truly Real) than the imitation offered by "realty" ("the thing itself") which can only be an appearance.
James's edition in the front of his mind. He begins by drawing attention to the contrast between his current undertaking and "the processional dignity of such a collection as that of the works of Henry James" (x). Wells even has reservations about the term "works" in relation to his collection, and in the General Introduction he announces (referring to himself in the third person): "'Writings' he will call them, in this preface at least, rather than 'Works' as the title has it, because they are so miscellaneous and uneven" (ix). He goes on to claim that "The idea of producing a 'finished work' was never strong at any time in the writer's mind" (x). Some of his fictions, he asserts, have been written with considerable care, whilst others are "sketches... lacking any pretension to 'finish' or 'execution' or any of the implicit claims of the set and deliberate and dignified work of art" (x). As always, one must take with a pinch of salt any of Wells's statements about his own work which appear to be adopting Jamesian or Idealist (Realist) criteria in relation to literature and art.13 Within a few pages he is invoking both the structure of the human mind and the nature of language as a challenge to the very notion of "finish" and permanence. There are no fixed terms, he asserts. Science and philosophy are described as "simplifications imposed on us by the limitations and imperfections of our minds" and so-called absolutes such as Right and God "may also prove to be relative and provisional" (xvi) - an idea which had, of course, been a feature of Wells's thinking since the 1904 "Scepticism of the Instrument". His own writings, Wells explains, have been in various ways about the rapid and profound changes which have taken place in human society - "all these volumes are about unrest and change" (xvii) - and, he goes on:

13 When Wells rejected the invitation to join the Academic Committee of the Royal Society of Literature in 1912, on the grounds that he objected to "controls and fixed standards in these things" and felt that fiction is "best anarchic," he appears to have been reacting against the formalist aesthetic. Keating argues that when James offered advice to Wells and R.L Stevenson on form and expression, they were both "being invited to join the 'modernists', the most exclusive of all the specialists. Both declined and have never been forgiven" (The Haunted Study 343).
The writer confesses his profound disbelief in any perfect or permanent work of art. All art, all science, and still more certainly all writing are experiments in statement. There will come a time for every work of art when it will have served its purpose and be bereft of its last rag of significance. (xviii)

As a Realist, Henry James strives for an ideal, essential perfection in art, whilst for Wells the Nominalist every piece of writing is an experiment, both unique (in the sense in which, as he had argued in "The Rediscovery of the Unique", every phenomenon is unique) and, in the nature of things, ephemeral. Expression is important insofar as it increases the power and effectiveness of a text but it does not give it a transcendental status, nor does it have the power to ensure permanence, either for the text itself or for its subject. Literary worth is, for Wells, measured by social relevance. "In the course of a few decades," he argues, all his fiction may have ceased to be of interest: "the snobbery of Kipps for example or the bookish illiteracy of Mr Polly may become altogether inexplicable" (Autobiography 500).

b) Modernism. Wells and Language

The quarrel with James may well have prompted in Wells a defensive - sometimes aggressive - attitude towards "literary artistry" and a use of terms which were less moderate than he might otherwise have used.14 These assertions, as we have seen in Chapter One, led in turn to the widely accepted view that he was a self-declared philistine, who cared nothing for art and took no pains with literary expression. The quarrel

14 Wells's use of the terms "artist", "literature" and "journalist" must always be seen in relation to his early experiences with James and Conrad. Arnold Bennett appears to have recognised this when he wrote in a letter to Wells: "Art really you hate. It means to you what arty means to me" (Arnold Bennett and H.G Wells 124). For Wells, "art" seems to have meant form without substance (See Preface to Volume 10 of the Atlantic Edition). "Journalist", too, had specific connotations. Keating points out in The Haunted Study that by the 1880s the word "journalist" had come to mean someone who wrote mainly for the newspapers, and newspapers meant Answers, Tit-Bits and the Northcliffe empire, so that when Wells told James that he would rather be called a journalist than a novelist, he "was deliberately associating himself with what he knew James would regard as one of the most corrupting cultural forces of modern life" (184).
was important, too, because it coincided with a period in which high aestheticism was the dominant voice of literary discourse, when major changes in literary taste were to boost Henry James's prestige and diminish Wells's reputation as a literary figure. James's novels played a large part in the development of Modernism in England; many critics see him, in fact, as the Father of Modernism, or even - in his later work at least - as one of the first generation of Modernist novelists.15 "As far as fiction is concerned," writes Peter Faulkner, "Modernism may be seen to have developed from the highly conscious activity, the devotion to an ideal of Art, which Henry James (with complex reservations) took over from the great French novelist [Flaubert]" (A Modernist Reader 15). Equally important to Wells's position as a writer, was the lasting influence of James's critical writings.

In Boon, Wells had shown himself as both perceptive and prescient: "You see," Boon said, "you can't now talk about literature without going through James. James is to criticism what Immanuel Kant is to philosophy - a partially comprehensible essential, an inevitable introduction. If you understand what James is up to and if you understand what James is not up to, then you are placed. You are in a position to lay about you with significance. Otherwise...." (98)

From the vantage point of the 1990s, the trailing away of that last sentence can be seen not merely as satirical but also as prophetic. James's view of the form of the novel and of the criteria for assessing it was to prove extraordinarily influential. Many of his tenets - taken up and expanded by later writers - became unquestioned prescriptions for the novel form, and were to remain so for decades. Leon Edel, writing in 1957, in an introduction to a selection of James's critical prefaces, describes them as "in the opinion of most critics, a veritable cornerstone of modern fictional theory." They have, he adds, become "a kind of fount and source for the critical terminology and criticism itself of fiction" (Henry James: The Future of the Novel 43).

When Wells told James that Boon had been prompted by the conviction that "Your view was, I felt, altogether too dominant in the world of criticism" (Henry James and H.G. Wells 264), James replied:

But I have no view of life and literature, I maintain, other than that our form of the latter in especial is admirable exactly by its range and variety, its plasticity and liberality, its fairly living on the sincere and shifting experience of the individual practitioner. (266)

But the qualifying phrase "other than" is, perhaps, disingenuous. Do not the following clauses belie the principles and precepts which underpin James’s critical writings: principles which—as developed in the practice and theoretical criticism of such writers as T.S. Eliot and Virginia Woolf—have continued to influence literary criticism to the present day? Henry James had, in fact, a very specific theory of literary expression and its relation to life. What is more, its implicit ideas—the notions of organic form and structural unity, and of the overriding importance of perspective or point of view in the novel—were soon to be formalized in Percy Lubbock’s The Craft of Fiction, most notably in the distinction between "telling" and "showing": "The art of fiction does not begin," writes Lubbock, "until the novelist thinks of his story as a matter to be shown, to be so exhibited that it will tell itself" (62).16 James’s emphasis on the impersonality of the artist and the irreducibility of the literary text, on its status as a unique, autonomous whole, were both notions which became central to the thinking and practice of Modernist writers. Wells’s vigorous opposition to such ideas, as expressed, for instance, in "The Contemporary Novel" separated him unequivocally from this new approach.

Literary Modernism, then, embraced various theoretical positions which ran counter to Wells’s ideas about the social function of

16 Although Lubbock claims in his preface to The Craft of Fiction that James is "the only begetter of all our studies in this manner of approach to the novelist at work" (viii), the binaries he identifies—"telling/showing"; "scene/summary"; "panoramic/pictorial"—are in many ways reductive, whilst James’s account of these processes, partly perhaps because of his allusive, metaphorical style, appears less formulaic and prescriptive, although equally positive.
literature, but was most damaging to critical assessment of his writing in its approach to language. "The whole of Literature," Roland Barthes argues, "from Flaubert to the present day became the problematics of language" (Writing Degree Zero 4). Modernist writers saw it as their first task "to purify the dialect of the tribe" (Eliot, Four Quartets), and later Anglo-American New Criticism, which, David Lodge suggests, "was partly motivated by a desire to justify the experiments of modernist writing" (After Bakhtin 5), was also, in its theory and practice, focusing on the problematics of language. These critics were influenced by Eliot's insistence on the literary work as autonomous - "I have assumed as axiomatic that a creation, a work of art, is autotelic" (Selected Essays 30) - which depends on a particular view of language, one which discounts its social nature. They were influenced too by I.A Richards's attempt to explain poetic effect in terms of language. Brian Lee claims, in "The New Criticism and the Language of Poetry," that Modernist critical theory took its direct inspiration from Richards's distinction between referential (scientific) language and emotive (literary) language: "His is the classical statement of a view of poetic language which has been at the centre of critical controversy for forty years" (32).

Wells came to be grouped with Bennett and Galsworthy as the Edwardian older generation, materialists from whose methods and techniques younger writers must at all costs detach themselves. Virginia Woolf is unequivocal: "the sooner English fiction turns its back upon them, as politely as may be, and marches, if only into the desert, the better for its soul" ("Modern Fiction" 185-86).

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18 In Principles of Criticism, Richards argues that in emotive language the truth or falsity of any reference to the outside world is immaterial. The attempt to establish the poetic/non-poetic language opposition was not new. Derek Attridge, in Peculiar Language argues that the attempt "to find a way of defining literary language against a norm from which that language is at the same time derived" (3) can be traced back to Aristotle, whilst Mary Pratt in Towards a Speech Act Theory of Literature suggests that in its modern form, the origins of the distinction "go back at least to Romanticism and probably to the rise of scientific language in the seventeenth century" (xi). What was new in Richard's theory was its ostensibly scientific basis, which was backed up by the account of empirical research into the "protocols" of reading set out in Practical Criticism.
Starting from this premise, New Criticism is centrally and self-consciously concerned with establishing the particular qualities of poetic as opposed to "scientific" language. There are, however, despite the obvious differences between Henry James's non-theorized assumptions about language and the ostensibly rigorous methods of Modernism and New Criticism, discernible resemblances between their approaches. There is, for instance, the same emphasis on the relationship between direct experience and form. For John Crowe Ransom, for example, the "ontology" or "body" of the poem is its reconstruction of the immediacy of the poet's experience of life or the physical world (*New Criticism* 268-75). There is, too, the same emphasis on the representation of this experience *via* concrete images. Thus, like James, the "new critics" valued, and believed they could locate and evaluate, the "perfect" fusion of subject and form which constitutes the Ideal, and it is interesting that New Criticism has been seen as Platonist in its tendency to *é priori* thinking about the language of poetry.

Similarly, although James's critical writing is concerned with the novel, and the "new critics" focus on poetry, there are, nonetheless, marked similarities in the ways in which both the process of writing and the literary texts themselves are described through metaphor and analogy. In his discussion of James in *The Pound Era*, Hugh Kenner suggests that the analogy with the visual artist had both a profound influence on James's view of his practice as a writer - "he did not tell but make: making objects, substantial as statues and heavy framed pictures are substantial" - and a lasting effect on subsequent critical thinking about language as literary expression. This is because the analogy diverts attention away from the nature of the signifier as an arbitrary acoustic or visual (graphic) image:

The story enters the mute world and partakes of the enigmatic silence of objects, though attention may discern "the figure in the carpet." So a whole generation felt, deaf to words' duration, blind to their transparency; and we still talk as though fictions existed in three dimensional space. (27)

Thus, although the proponents of New Criticism concentrate on what Ransom refers to as the "texture" of the poem, and give close readings of particular poems, focusing on diction, metre and imagery, they seem,
nonetheless, constantly to be evading a discussion of signification *per se*. For Alan Tate, for example, language is "tension" - the study of intension and extension (denotation and connotation) in the language of the poem ("Tension in Poetry"), whereas for Cleanth Brooks the answer is paradox: "there is a sense in which paradox is the language appropriate and inevitable to poetry. It is the scientist whose truth requires a language purged of every trace of paradox; apparently the truth which the poet utters can be approached only in terms of paradox" (1). R.P Blackmur calls his book of essays on poetry *The Language of Gesture*, explaining that since gesture pre-dates language in human experience, gesture in language is, therefore:

the outward and dramatic play of inward and imaged meaning. It is that play of meaningfulness among words which cannot be defined in the formulas in the dictionary, but which is defined in their use together; gesture is that meaningfulness which is moving in every sense of the word: what moves the words and what moves us. (6)

The pictorial analogy, too, figures prominently in New Critical writings, and notably in the title of W.K Wimsatt's influential *The Verbal Icon*, published over forty years after James's prefaces. Wimsatt draws on the notion of an icon as aesthetic sign in order to explain the book's title: "the verbal image which most fully realizes its verbal capacities is that which is not merely a bright picture (in the usual modern meaning of the term image) but also an interpretation of reality in its metaphoric and symbolic dimensions. Thus: The Verbal Icon" (A Note on the Title of this Book).

R.S Crane, however, an opponent of New Criticism, commented in 1952: "for all the current insistence on 'concreteness' and the primacy of the 'word', it is hard to think of any period in the long history of criticism in which the analytical concepts employed by most practical critics have been fewer in number or more abstract" (Critics and Criticism 15). Despite this lack of interest in precise linguistic description,19 Modernism and New Criticism's assumptions about language, 19 This was a period when, in England and America, there was scarcely any interchange between linguists and literary critics. See René Wellek, "The Main Trends in Twentieth Century Criticism," *Concepts of Criticism*. 
together with an emphasis on close-reading and practical criticism, resulted in the foregrounding of particular textual features—ambiguity, ambivalence, irony, paradox, for example—which had the effect of privileging metaphor over metonymy in literary texts. As has often been shown, these approaches are more suitable for the analysis of poetry than of prose fiction, and when they are applied to the novel, they favour Modernist as opposed to realist forms of expression.

Writing about Russian Formalist approaches to language, in "Discourse and the Novel," Bakhtin claims: "Novelistic discourse proved to be the acid test for this whole way of conceiving style, exposing the narrowness of this type of thinking and its inadequacy in all areas of discourse's artistic life" (Dialogic 261).

Such presuppositions about language can certainly be shown to have affected critical responses to Wells's variety of prose fiction, and many of the attacks on his style have been based on stylistic criteria derived from Modernism. Mark Schorer's essay, "Technique as Discovery," for instance, published in 1949, reaches wholly negative conclusions about Wells's writing. In this essay, Schorer discusses a number of novels, including Tono-Bungay and Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, and he tells us—in a very Jamesian phrase—that he will focus on "the uses to which language, as language, is put to express the quality of the experience in question," and the ways in which point of view is employed "not only as a mode of dramatic delimitation, but more particularly, of thematic definition" (69). In fact, the language and point of view of Tono-Bungay are not discussed at all in Schorer's essay except in the form of generalised comments. We are told that "The novelist flounders through a series of literary imitations" and that George Ponderevo fails to fulfil "the primary demand which one makes of such a book as this— that means be discovered whereby the dimensions of the hero contain the experiences he recounts" (74). As evidence for this, Schorer points to the end of the novel which is described as its most "significant failure" insofar as it fails to convey what Wells "meant to represent" (392). All in all, Schorer concludes, "Wells, with his...large blob of potential material, did not know how to cut it to the novel's taste" (83). It is hard to resist the conclusion, in fact, that Tono-Bungay features in the essay merely as an exemplum of lack of
technique in the novel, as a dreadful warning of what happens when a
writer wilfully ignores the Jamesian rules of art - "Technique alone
objectifies the materials of art; hence technique alone evaluates those
materials" (73). The terms Schorer employs in this statement, left as
they are without definition or precise reference, could, in fact, be
described as meaningless belle-letrist aestheticism.

Schorer's criteria for assessing technique are those of Modernism,
as he makes clear in "Fiction and the Analogical Matrix," published in
the following year. In the later article he argues that the novel must
be given the same attention as poetry: "criticism must begin with the
simplest assertion: fiction is a literary art. It must begin with the
base of language, with the word, with figurative structures, with
rhetoric as skeleton and style as body of meaning" (539). In both
essays, he uses Ransom's term, "texture," and takes for granted the
existence of a literary language - "language as used to create a certain
texture and tone which in themselves state and define themes and
meaning" - as opposed to "the counters of our ordinary speech"
("Technique as Discovery" 68). Given this method of assessment, it is
scarcely surprising that, as Schorer puts it, "James grows for us and
Wells disappears" ("Technique" 73).

Because of his assumptions about language and novel form, and the
contrasts he wishes to make, Schorer is clearly an unsympathetic critic,
but at this period, even writers who set out to enhance Wells's
reputation reach similar conclusions. In "H.G Wells Tries to Be a
Novelist," for instance, Gordon Ray begins by asserting that he is
employing the word "novelist" in a special way: "the high sense in which
it was used by James and Conrad when they set out to make the novel the
equal of the other great literary forms" (106). Starting from this
definition, he states categorically that Wells wrote only four "true"
novels,20 and, although the evaluative criteria are not made explicit,

20 This is exactly the approach Wells had deplored forty years
earlier in "The Contemporary Novel": "You have all heard that impressive
dictum that some particular theatrical display, although moving,
interesting, and continually entertaining from start to finish, was for
occult technical reasons 'not a play,' and in the same way you are
continuously having your appreciation of fiction dashed by the
mysterious parallel condemnation, that the story you like 'isn't a
novel'" (An Englishman Looks at the World 151).
it is evident that Ray is looking for unified structure ("credence is strained to the breaking point" (145) by the quap episode in *Tono-Bungay*); "showing" rather than "telling" ("because of the novel's narrow focus, the social frame in which Lewisham works out his destiny is suggested in occasional asides rather than presented" (127)); and impersonality in narration (*The History of Mr Polly* is praised for "Wells's avoidance of intervention" (154)). In fact, except for *The History of Mr Polly*, Ray concludes, even these four novels cannot be considered "perfectly harmonious and consistent works of art" (125).

It is significant that even Bernard Bergonzi's seminal study, *The Early H.G. Wells*, which, in the 1960s, played a large part in establishing the literary worth of the early Scientific Romances, lays considerable stress on such stylistic features as symbolism, metaphor and mythopoeic qualities - linguistic features conspicuously lacking in Wells's later novels. In consequence, as Parrinder points out, the book had "the unintended result of confirming his somewhat peripheral status in modern literary studies" (*H.G. Wells: The Critical Heritage* 29). In his final chapter, Bergonzi makes an absolute distinction between the artist and the propagandist - "I am assuming as axiomatic," he writes, "that the bulk of Wells's published output has lost whatever literary interest it might have had, and is not likely to regain it in the foreseeable future, whatever value it may possess for the social historian or the historian of ideas" (165) - and it is clear that his conclusion is based above all on assumptions about language.²¹

Metaphorical, paradigmatic prose (in Jakobson's sense) is literary, therefore Wells as "a symbolic and mythopoeic writer" can be counted as an artist; his variety of discursive, metonymic prose, on the other

²¹ It is evident in the final chapter that Bergonzi accepts the Jamesian "telling"/"showing" distinction, because he quotes from F.R Leavis's dismissal of Wells in *The Great Tradition*: "there is an elementary distinction to be made between the discussion of problems and ideas, and what we find in the great novelists" (The Early H.G. Wells 165). A number of comments on Wells's fiction take this distinction for granted. Geoffrey West, discussing the debate with James in his biography of Wells, writes: "The issue is, of course between the art which renders life and that which discusses it; finally and fundamentally it is a metaphysical issue," but then goes on to argue that the only true art is that which "renders" (*H.G. Wells* 212).
hand, is by definition non-literary, so in relation to the later fiction, Wells must on these grounds alone be dismissed as a literary figure and classed as a propagandist.

Michael Draper's recent study of Wells, makes similar stylistic assumptions. He tells us that he has decided not to give detailed attention to The War in the Air because, since this book "relies more on statement, less on symbol than the earlier science fiction, there is no need to examine it at length" (H.G Wells 69). Jonathan Culler's contention, however, that the "the hegemony of New Criticism" and "the determining influence it has exercised on our ways of writing about and teaching literature" still holds sway, despite the many attacks which have been made on it since World War Two, acts as an interesting commentary on the debate about Wells's critical status. "Whatever critical affiliations we may proclaim," Culler maintains, "we are all New Critics, in that it takes a strenuous effort to escape notions of the autonomy of the literary work, the importance of demonstrating its unity, and the requirements of 'close reading'" (The Pursuit of Signs 3). One remembers George Boon's portentous "Otherwise...." (Boon 98). James's claim that Wells "has cut loose from literature clearly - practically altogether; he will still do a lot of writing probably - but it won't be that" (Henry James and H.G Wells 164n) seems to have been taken as self-evident truth by the literary establishment of his period and since, as comments by writers such as F.R Leavis and T.S Eliot attest.22

This non-referential view of literary/poetic language has been - and is still - a hotly debated and unresolved issue, and it certainly cannot be resolved in this study. It is important to note, however, that the dominance of these ideas over such a long period has been, and still is, directly opposed to Wells's ideas about language and literature. For him, the *raison d'être* of a literary text was its social effects. As he wrote to Henry James: "To you literature like painting is an end, to me literature like architecture, is a means, it has a use" (Henry James and H.G Wells 264). Any attempt to divorce the

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22 See Eliot's discussion of Wells in the 1928 introduction to *The Sacred Wood*; Leavis's review of *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind* in 1932 ("Babbitt buys the World", *For Continuity*).
text from the social context in which it is produced and received results, Wells claims, in "The Novel". Although such a construct may fulfil James's criteria it is scathingly dismissed in Wells's autobiography as "a sort of super-reality with 'created' persons in it" (Experiment in Autobiography 494). Wells's novels, then, not only set out to be referential, to engage with contemporary social issues, they also unashamedly declare their purpose, and in the aesthetic climate in which much of his work was produced this would in itself have been enough to categorize him, in Stephen Spender's terms, as a "contemporary" and not a "modern" writer.23 No text, writes Colin MacCabe, "can escape the discourse of literary criticism in which it is referred to, named and valued" (2-3), and as Parrinder points out in his introduction to H.G Wells: The Critical Heritage, after 1912 both fictional practice and critical opinion went against Wells and he, "came to be seen as an artistic reactionary" (24), together with Bennett and Galsworthy.

This thesis wishes to suggest, then, why Wells's considerable strengths as a writer have often been ignored, and why the aspects of his writing which are generally regarded as faults and weaknesses of style have frequently been both misunderstood and wrongly ascribed. There have, over the last twenty years or so, been a number of developments in textual analysis which provide new ways of describing the language and narrative conventions of prose fiction.24 Stylistics,

23 In Spender's influential book, The Struggle of the Modern "the contemporary" "belongs to the modern world, represents it in his work, and accepts its values of science and progress" (77). He may be critical of his society, even revolutionary, but he is "partisan in the sense of seeing and supporting partial attitudes." The modern, on the other hand, "tends to see life as a whole and hence in modern conditions to condemn it as a whole" (77).

24 See Wayne Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (1961) (writing twenty years later, in his introduction to Problems in Dostoevsky's Poetics, Booth claims that his argument in The Rhetoric of Fiction would have been more sophisticated had he "not been ignorant, like almost everyone else, of the work of Bakhtin and his circle" (xix)); Barbara Hardy, The Appropriate Form (1964); Scholes and Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative (1966); Lodge, After Bakhtin (1990).
or to use Roger Fowler’s term, linguistic criticism, pragmatics, narratology and, above all, Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism provide methods and approaches which reject the notion of a literary language, and start from the assumption that "a work of literature, like any other piece of language activity, is meaningful only in the perspective of the whole range of the uses of language" (Halliday, "Descriptive Linguistics in Literary Studies" 71). These approaches acknowledge that the social dimension of all forms of language use can never be discounted, that, in Volosinov’s terms, "Word is a two-sided act" (82).

II FORMS: The Characteristics of Wells’s Style

a) Changes and Developments

Since Wells wrote so prolifically any detailed attempt at stylistic description would take several studies of the length of this one. It is necessary, therefore, to be highly selective. The general view of Wells’s style has been, as Michael Draper suggests, that "It is an aspect of his work often passed over in silence by critics, and with some justification" (H.G Wells 32). I shall argue here that Wells possessed positive strengths as a stylist which—in his later work in particular—have seldom been acknowledged or explored, and that the generally accepted view that after 1910 or so, his fiction becomes less readable can be explained by factors centrally related to his theory of language.

Perhaps the most obvious question to be asked of any writer whose

25 At a period when Flaubert was esteemed for taking three days to complete a sentence, and Joyce took twenty-four hours to find the words and another twenty-four to put them in the right order (cited in Budgen 19-20), the sheer size of Wells’s output ("More than twelve million words were published under Wells’s name over a span of fifty years" (Wagar 3)) may constitute another reason why he was regarded as out of step with literary fashion. Anthony Burgess suggests that "the costive output of the Bloomsbury clan generated new standards" and the prolific "Wellsian" tradition, "so it was assumed, entailed a great deal of careless writing" (TLS October 21-27 1988). One critic refers, in a revealing phrase, to "the vast, bloated mass of his work which presents a formidable barrier to the interest of even the most avid Wellsian fan" (Borrello 108)
career spans over fifty years is to what extent his style changes. Certainly Wells's earliest surviving writings are very different from the mature work. In The Early H.G Wells, Bergonzi includes The Chronic Argonauts, an early version of The Time Machine, which first appeared as a serial in The Science Schools' Journal in 1888. In comparison with later versions of the story the vocabulary of the early piece is formal and polysyllabic, the sentences long and complex and the lengthy descriptive passage at the beginning of the story is overloaded with adjectives - one sentence has twelve - plus an abundance of compound adjectives: "rust-devoured", "rain-fed", "green-black", "yellow-brown," "cobweb-draped" and "lichen-filmed" (188), for example, occur in one short passage. There is, too, a marked tendency towards formal constructions and archaic lexis. Wells's fondness for certain archaisms in his writing continued to be an unimportant but consistent feature of his style. He seldom uses the word "dark", for instance, showing an idiosyncratic preference for "darkling," a Middle English word which, according to the Shorter OED, has been regarded as poetic usage since the mid-eighteenth century. Thus, in "The Chronic Argonauts," when the time machine takes off we are told, "The author knew the periphery of that eyot by heart, and the question that troubled him was, 'Whence?'" (202). But this is prentice work,26 a story which Wells describes in the Atlantic Prefaces as "written obviously under the influence of Hawthorne and smeared with that miscellaneous allusiveness that Carlyle and many other of the great Victorians had made the fashion" (Preface Vol. 1 xxi). Between this and the final version of the story, he records, "A cleansing course of Swift and Sterne intervened," and, of course, the style of The Time Machine is markedly different.

David Lodge draws attention to Wells's use of capitalization in

26 Many of Wells's pieces in the Journal, despite their immaturity, do give indications of the ability to respond to and reproduce a range of diverse styles which characterizes his later work. In a short story, "The Flat Earth Again," the pompous speech of the central character is, the editors of H.G Wells: Early Writings tell us, a parody of the style of Richard A. Proctor, author of Old and New Astronomy (Philmus and Hughes 33n) whilst "A Talk with Gryllotalpa" replicates the vocabulary and prose rhythms of A Pilgrim's Progress, which serves as the starting point of the story (Philmus and Hughes 19–21).
his early novels - "When he attempts 'realism', Wells falls back on
Victorian mannerisms" - which is condemned as a Dickensian "trick" (The
Novelist at the Crossroads 216-17). But the use of capitalization is
not as frequent in Wells's fiction as Lodge's comment would suggest, and
when such uses do occur in early novels it is generally for thematic or
ironic emphasis - their effect is to mock rather than emulate the
Victorian practice of conveying portentousness by capitalizing nouns.
In Kipps, for instance, the falseness of the hero's social aspirations
is conveyed by this device, as is the naivety of the two young people in
Love and Mr Lewisham. Ethel Henderson seeks to impress Mr Lewisham with
her knowledge of Thomas Carlyle: "She knew he was a Really Great Writer,
a very Great Writer indeed. All she had read of him she liked. She
could say that. As much as she liked anything. And she had seen his
house in Chelsea" (30-31). The use of free indirect discourse is very
effective here; it conveys the breathless, naïve, eager quality of
Ethel's delivery. What is funny, as well as touching, in this passage,
is that Lewisham, who scarcely knows London, is impressed: "It seemed to
put her at once on a footing of intimacy with this impossible
Personality" (31). It is presumably because later editors have
recognised the literary effects produced by capitalization in these
novels that it has been retained in later editions. What is striking,
in fact, is how unVictorian Wells's writing is at this early stage of
his career when judged by basic linguistic features such as lexis, and
sentence length and complexity.

The style of Wells's first realist novels is, in fact,
distinguished from that of his mature fiction not by its form but by its
tone. Several critics have commented on the facetiousness, the
relentless jocularity of much of the early writing, and in his study of
Wells, Parrinder draws attention to this in Kipps and The History of Mr
Polly:

In these books the experience of the simple hero, the "little man"
confined in the nets of the retail trade, is revealed and
interpreted by a complex narrator addressing the reader from what
Wells elsewhere called "our educated standpoint".....The comedy
arises from a confrontation between the class into which Wells was
born and the class into which he adventured and it leads towards a
new world of escape from the limitations of either (34). He goes on to argue that in The Wheels of Chance: "writer and reader are assumed to be familiar with only the customer's side of the counter" (54-55), but this, I think, overstates the case. Even in the opening paragraphs there are shifts of focalization which suggest that the narrator is unsure exactly where he is standing, and Michael Draper's study, "Competing Viewpoints in The Wheels of Chance," for instance, points to the ways in which different class perspectives are evident in the novel.

In the long, periodic opening sentence, the focus seems clear enough. The narrator addresses himself explicitly to the middle-class lady reader:

If you (presuming that you are of the sex that does such things) - if you had gone into the Drapery Emporium - which is really only magnificent for shop - of Messrs Antrobus & Co - a perfectly fictitious "Co." by the by - of Putney, on the 14th of August, 1895, had turned to the right-hand side, where the blocks of white linen and piles of blankets rise up to the rail from which the pink and blue prints depend, you might have been served by the central figure of this story that is now beginning. (3)

The precision of the metonymic detail, together with the knowing, self-denigrating, confidential asides, establish from the outset a clear relationship between narrator and narratee; both are on the customer's side of the counter. And in the next few paragraphs, the hypothetical structures, together with the modal verb forms - "He would have come forward" (4), "if you had noticed" (5), "a puffy shop-walker would have been bowing you out" (7) and so on - reconstruct what is assumed to be characteristic behaviour seen from the customer's perspective. In this opening passage, then, the sentence forms suggest that both writer and reader are adopting the same perspective. Both know that such encounters in drapers' shops are always like this, that this is the way drapers' assistants are expected to behave - the text creates, then assumes, a shared reality. But after a few pages the discourse moves from the general to the particular, there is a move "into shadow and mystery below the counter" (4) - a world the customer never sees - and with the description of the bruises on the assistant's legs, which, we
are told, are the result of learning to ride a bicycle. Hoopdriver becomes, in spite of the facetiousness of the narration, an individual, an engaging young man with a personal history.

From this point, the modality of the verb phrases changes from the conditional to the simple past, the tone of the text from the hypothetical to the declarative, and, in Genette's terms, Hoopdriver ceases to be merely focalized and becomes a focalizer. Throughout the book there is an uncertainty in Wells's handling of linguistic and literary conventions, as if he feels unable to trust his chosen narrative format. It is not enough, it seems, for the narrator to depict Hoopdriver's reactions to his unaccustomed freedom; he must also point out that: "Only those who toil six long days out of seven...know the exquisite sensations of the First Holiday Morning" (20). And when Hoopdriver, savouring his freedom by contrasting it with what he would have been doing in the drapery at that hour, visualises Gosling, the apprentice, trying to roll a piece of huckaback, again the narrator breaks in to make sure we do not miss the point: "only those who have rolled pieces of huckaback know just how detestable huckaback is to roll" (48).

In Love and Mr Lewisham, the opening chapters reveal a similarly indeterminate focus. Parrinder describes the narrative as "arch and mannered" (H.G Wells 51). The book opens with a description of Mr Lewisham's attic bedroom and of the Schema on the wall, which outlines his projected programme of achievement. By means of the narrator's exclamations - "But just think of the admirable quality of such a scheme!" (4) - and questions - "Could anything be simpler or more magnificent?" (5) - the reader is again placed in a superior position and at an ironic distance from the struggling would-be scholar. The overall effect of Love and Mr Lewisham, however, is far more assured than The Wheels of Chance. After all, there is something slightly absurd about the intensity of the hero's aspirations at the beginning of the book, as he himself comes to realise. Once Lewisham is established as a real student at the Science School, however, the tone of the narration changes, and within a few chapters the focus has become that of the hero. This uncertainty of narratorial stance is evident to some extent in most of Wells's Edwardian realist fiction as I suggested in
Chapter Three.

But what of the accusation that Wells was careless and slovenly, too impatient to take pains with his writing? Since he must often have been writing against the pressures of journalistic deadlines, no doubt Wells did sometimes write carelessly and hastily. So far as his major fiction is concerned, however, Wells's assertion in his autobiography: "I have to admit that the larger part of my fiction was written lightly and with a certain haste" (499) - a statement which has often been quoted against him - is manifestly untrue. It is clear from the manuscripts that Wells revised and rewrote his novels and short stories extensively. Not only did he write a number of drafts, he copiously emended the typescripts, including, for instance, "balloons" of interpolated material. What is more, this re-working is not restricted to early work. The manuscript of Christina Alberta's Father indicates that Wells revised the typescript heavily, and made further alterations before the book was printed. In the light of this evidence, his frequent self-denigrations should perhaps be seen as primarily defensive.

Accusations of slovenliness date from very early in Wells's career. An article, "M. H.G Wells et le Style," by M. Frank Blunt, appeared in Nouvelle Revue in September 1904, complaining that Wells had been over-valued by a number of French critics whose judgements had been based on the French translations of his work. M. Blunt claims that translation has improved Wells's style to such an extent - the French version of The Wonderful Visit (La Merveilleuse Visite), for instance, "est débarrassée de ses contre-sens et de ses erreurs" (192) - that the

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27 An unpublished thesis by Joan Schulz, A Study of H.G Wells's In the Days of the Comet, Northern Illinois University, 1963, is based on a detailed examination of the manuscript of the book. The most extensive study of this aspect of Wells's writing is Bernard Loing's H.G Wells à l'Oeuvre which discusses the draftings and revisions of The Time Machine, The Island of Dr Moreau and Love and Mr Lewisham in relation to the manuscripts.

28 Ingvald Raknem includes the title of Blunt's article and the Westminster Gazette replies in his listing, "Essays and Notes in Papers and Periodicals," H.G Wells and his Critics 460.
French reader remains unaware of its infelicities in the original English. Blunt's main accusation is that Wells has a contempt for "style" and is the victim of his own enthusiasm. He quotes a short passage from the newly-published *The Food of the Gods*:

> The beating steps of time were hushed into silence, and it seemed to them the universe hung still. Only their hearts were audible, beating. They seemed to be living together in a world where there is no death, and indeed so it was with them then. It seemed to them that they sounded, and indeed they sounded, such hidden splendours in the very heart of things as none have ever reached before. Even for mean and little souls, love is the revelation of splendours...." (*The Food of the Gods* 244).

and points to the repetition of words and sounds - in phrases such as "Was with them then," "it seemed to them that they sounded." Wells is condemned because there are "autant de sifflantes que de mots" (as many sibilants as words).

Admittedly, this is not a passage that one would want to defend on grounds of style, but M. Blunt's specific criticisms are, nonetheless, absurd since most are far more applicable to the phonemic and syntactic patterns of the French language than they are to those of English. Blunt had, for instance, found eleven uses of the verb "to be" on one page. A writer in the *Westminster Gazette* responding to the article, inquires very reasonably how Blunt expects "Mr Wells or any of us to get on without repeating the various parts of the verb 'to be'....think of the hideous complication of the profession of letters if a single use of the auxiliary verbs placed them out of court for the remainder of a page!" (*Gazette* September 27 1904).

More significant than the original article, in fact, is the correspondence it provoked in the British press. *T.P's Weekly* saw some positive qualities in Wells's style: "it...conveys his meaning with remarkable precision. And when Mr Wells chooses he can write with a sure sense of beauty" (October 7 1904). The *Westminster Gazette*, however, bristled at the implied criticism of English taste - Blunt had suggested that English readers did not notice how badly Wells wrote because England is a place where "l'on avale cependant sans sourciller les pires galimatias" (translated by the *Gazette* writer as "[they]
swallow the worst fustian without turning a hair" (September 27 1904)).
The next day, the Gazette published a reader's letter endorsing the view that Wells's writing is marked by carelessness: "while you had the opportunity, why did you not go on and point out the real, inherent slovenliness of the English which Mr Wells uses?" The letter goes on to object to Wells's omission of "that" as a relative pronoun in one sentence whilst including it in another ("it seemed to them the Universe hung still" followed four lines later by "It seemed to them that they sounded"); and, with reference to his work as a whole, to castigate him for mixing tenses; for using "none" with a plural verb; and for using punctuation which is not "educated": "It is not ungrammatical, but merely without any pretension to elegance or style" (Westminster Gazette September 28, 1904).

Arnold Bennett's letters to Wells at this period abound in similar complaints. He writes, for instance: "I think M. Blunt is apt to lay down canons for English that English won't have, but you know that on the whole I am a pro-Blunt. It is only because I have reasons for not wanting to quarrel with you that I have refrained from joining the 'W.G' correspondence" (113). What is interesting, however, in the Blunt-Westminster Gazette complaints, and in Bennett's specific criticisms, is their unquestioning acceptance of the prescriptive notions of "correctness" in grammar and syntax which prevailed at the turn of the century and still prevail in some quarters.28 Bennett takes Wells to task, for instance, about a sentence in Kipps:

You said last year, you even faithfully promised, that you were

28 Such ideas have been overtaken by the view that linguistics is a descriptive and not a prescriptive science (Crystal, Linguistics 56-76). For modern linguistics, Standard English can never be static because it is determined by usage, although there is "linguistic nostalgia" (Crystal 63), a strong tendency to preserve the status quo — and, as Barbara Strang points out: "at any period the maximum age-span of speakers is about a hundred years" (A History of English 21). The Westminster Gazette reader refers to Wells's omission of "that" in the clause "[I]t seemed to them] the Universe hung still" as a "solecism" even though, as he himself acknowledges, it was clearly not, even at that period, the only acceptable usage: "I am aware that there is high authority, even in prose, for the omitting of the 'that' or the 'as if,' which, however does not make it any the more right" (September 28, 1904).
going to write with more care. God-a-mercy! After the sentence on p. 409 beginning, "Next to starting a haberdasher's shop," I renounce the crusade. I respectfully give you up. Damn it, after all it doesn't matter how you write" (Arnold Bennett & H.G Wells 128).

The offending sentence reads: "Next to starting a haberdasher's shop, I doubt if Kipps could have been more truly happy than during those weeks of preparation" (409). Presumably Bennett is objecting to the presence of the unrelated or "floating" participle "starting" — a usage which is, of course, still deprecated as a possible source of false attribution. In this case, however, it is highly unlikely to lead to misunderstanding and would, in fact, probably not be noticed by most of today's readers.29

Wells replied to Bennett, cheerfully insisting that when it came down to it, "Stile [sic] my dear chap in this sense of petty word mongering has no place in English literature. The stile of my general design, the stile of my thought — C'est moi!" (115). This approach can now be seen to have had positive effects on his writing. Although, as I have indicated, there are obvious stylistic differences between Wells's first attempts at writing and his more mature work, within a few years as a professional author, Wells had acquired — indeed, as he emphasises in Experiment in Autobiography, had set out to develop — an idiomatic style which often ignored what were then regarded as grammatical niceties in favour of the simpler, often more colloquial form. The structuralist linguist, Uspensky, tracing changes in acceptability over time, points out that "As a rule, colloquial style is more progressive in terms of linguistic change: evolutionary processes usually occur here first, before they have affected the other levels of the language" (39).

The paradox is that forty-five years after Wells's death, a number of the "solecisms" which so disturbed Bennett and other contemporary critics have become part of ordinary usage in written language.

29 When Wells came to revise Kipps for the Atlantic Edition, he emended this sentence to read: "Short of starting a haberdasher's shop, I doubt if Kipps could have been more truly happy than during those weeks of preparation" (373) [my italics]. It seems an odd alteration to make, unless one assumes that Wells had remembered Bennett's criticism but misunderstood its reference (Galley proof G118 Kipps, Wells Archive).
Linguists point to the factors which have brought about rapid changes in Standard English since the beginning of the century—particularly the vast extension of means of communication and the various socio-historical factors, such as the increasing influence of American English, for instance, which have contributed to a lessening of formality. C.L Wrenn suggests that one of the more important social developments since the beginning of the century, so far as language change is concerned has been "the widening of school education and the reduced influence of a more traditional and Classical education which had been a brake upon change and a conserver of usage" (186), and Wells, of course, was one of the first writers from a lower-middle class background, with an unconventional education, to become so well-established—in Warren Wagar's terms, "the most serious of popular writers of his time, and the most popular of the serious" (6). All these factors, then, have helped to modify opinions about "grammatical" acceptability in written English, with the consequence that most of the usages which so affronted Wells's contemporaries now appear more acceptable to the contemporary reader than the prose of many of his detractors.30

This idiomatic style, then, was the result of conscious effort to break away from Victorian models. In his autobiography, Wells outlines the stages of development by which he made himself into a writer. He read extensively and "began to realize the cheapness and flatness of [his] own phrasing" (305) and, he comments, "I had not yet fused my colloquial with the literary language which was still slightly foreign to me" (307). He was writing copious letters to friends in a fluent colloquial style, but at the same time was producing mannered and formal constructions in his attempts at fiction, and, he feels, it was not until he succeeded in fusing the two that his "real writing" began: "I

30 See, for example, the use of single nouns with plural verbs—one of the "solecisms" objected to by the Westminster Gazette correspondent: ("'None' does not take a plural verb. It should, of course, be 'None has'") is a case in point. This is an instance where linguistic change has favoured Wells. Quirk and Greenbaum comment: "In British English, collective nouns, notionally plural but grammatically singular, obey notional concord" (7.20), and they note that "none" takes the plural form in idiomatic English (7.24).
produced something as good at least as my letters, something I could read aloud to people I respected without immediate shame. It was good enough to alter and correct and write over again" (308-9). The over-formal "Babu English"31 of his early prose was countered by these "endless letters" written to friends which, Wells claims, "had been releasing me from the restricted vocabulary of my boyhood, sharpened my phrasing and developing my skill in expression" (374).

In his study of Wells, Norman Nicholson writes: "As for style, he had none, if by style we mean the shaping of sentences which will be a pleasure in themselves" (98). The last clause, of course, begs the question. If style is to be defined thus, then Wells's writing is clearly to be condemned. But if style is defined as the particular applications that writers or speakers make of the choices available to them in the language (Turner 19)32 then it is not a precisely understood frame of reference, and Wells can be said to have very positive criteria for making linguistic choices - precision, directness and accessibility. As we have seen, in Experiment in Autobiography, he firmly dissociates himself from Conrad's and Ford Madox Hueffer's approach to style by stating: "I write as I walk because I want to get somewhere and I write

31 The term "Babu English," now no longer heard, was widely used up to the Second World War. The linguist, S.I Hayakawa, writing in 1939, records: "The British in India used it as a derogatory term for the pretentious and often comically inappropriate English used by poorly trained Indian clerks and civil servants" (239). He considers it a useful though offensive phrase because it contains an idea for which no other term exists: "discourse in which the speaker (or writer) throws around learned words he does not understand in order to create a favourable impression" (239). Wells continued to use the term throughout his life. In 1937 he wrote to an aspiring writer called Mark Benny: "We have a lot in common. We learnt to write by reading. We ransacked the dictionary for vocabulary. (So did Bennett). Gems of vocabulary stick out in your style. You were even more precocious than I (in some ways). I was still writing in Babu English at 17" (Letter, March 15 1937, Wells Archive).

32 See Crystal and Davy, Investigating English Style (9-14); Leech and Short, Style in Fiction ch. 1). Nicholson, of course, is obviously using the term "style" in its more restricted, evaluative sense, as being applicable only to "good" or "beautiful" writing (see Middleton Murry 4-8), but even in this sense, he's too sweeping in his judgements.
as straight as I can, just as I walk as straight as I can, because that is the best way to get there" (623). For him, any attempt to create (and admire for its own sake) an individual and elaborate style is a pose: "All these receptive critics pose for their work. They dress their souls up before the glass, add a few final touches of make-up and sally forth like old bucks for fresh 'adventures among masterpieces'" (623).

Wells's criteria for linguistic choices, then, produced a highly characteristic way of writing, although not one which conformed to the conventional characteristics of "fine writing" acknowledged by his contemporaries. Michael Draper quotes Orwell's dictum that good prose is like a window pane and adds: "To update the image, we may say that his words are like lines on a television screen or pixels on a VDU, there to carry the information, not to be seen in their own right" (H.G Wells 32). It is, perhaps, significant that one of Wells's favourite commendatory adjectives for describing language use is "lucid".33 In his book on the language of James Joyce, Joysprick, Anthony Burgess distinguishes between two kinds of writing in the novel. The Class 1 novelist, he claims, is one "in whose work language is a zero quality, transparent, unseductive, the overtones of connotation and ambiguity totally damped" (15). For the Class 2 novelist, on the other hand, "it is important that the opacity of the language be exploited, so that ambiguities, puns and centrifugal connotations are to be enjoyed rather than exploited" (15). In linguistic terms, Burgess over-simplifies the former category - he is, after all, interested in promoting Joyce - but nonetheless, this is a useful, albeit relative, distinction, and one which Wells would probably have agreed with. In Experiment in Autobiography, for instance, he claims that he finds much of Conrad's writing oppressive - "This incessant endeavour to keep prose bristling

33 Wells too uses the image in his early literary essays. In "The Pose Novel" (1893) he describes "true artists of letters" as "the white windows upon the truth of things" (Parrinder and Philmus 42-43), and his 1895 review, "Three Yellow Book Story-Tellers" asserts: "There is such a thing as a pelucid style, a transparent window upon the author's thought. But Mr Henry James has a ground-glass style" (Parrinder and Philmus 190). In A Modern Utopia, Wells claims, he has aimed at "lucid vagueness". In An Englishman Looks at the World, he complains, like Orwell, that political writing has become "opaque" (112). William Warren Wagar suggests that Wells has "almost a Frenchman's passion for the ideal of clarity" (96).
up and have it 'vivid' all the time defeats its end" - and he much prefers "the naked vigour" of Stephen Crane's writing (623).

Transparency, of course, can only be an illusion. As Genette points out, all narrative is diegesis: "The verbal 'imitation' of non-verbal events is simply a utopia of illusion" (Narrative Discourse 169), and signifiers in "transparent" prose are equally as arbitrary, no closer to the referent than in "opaque" writing which foregrounds language. As William James says, the word "dog" does not bite. It is, nevertheless, worth asking in what ways language use might achieve this illusion of transparency.

Linguists distinguish between linguistic features which are "marked" and those which are "unmarked," a distinction based on "the theory that in the languages of the world certain linguistic elements are more basic, natural, and frequent (unmarked) than others."34 There is some disagreement amongst stylisticians on the question of whether there is such a thing as an absence of style. Barthes uses the term "writing degree zero" to refer to the style of classical French écriture, and Camus's Outsider, he claims, achieves transparency: "a style of absence which is almost an ideal absence of style" (Writing Degree Zero 64). Nonetheless, as Katie Wales points out in A Dictionary of Stylistics, "It is questionable...whether a work can have no style: the very absence of a 'marked' style can itself be seen to be stylistically significant" (484). Thus, as Fowler argues, attempts to achieve neutrality, as in Hemingway and James's attempt at impersonality, "are so saturated with consistent syntactic restriction (very different for each, of course) that willy-nilly, these are two of the most recognizable writers in English fiction" ("The Referential Code and Narrative Authority" 145).

34 This is the definition given by Richards et al in Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (171). Crystal gives a much more detailed and qualified explanation in A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics (188-89) but the quotation I have given covers the use I wish to make of the term. The Russian Formalist term "defamiliarization" is a more restricted idea since it relates specifically to "literariness"; as Tomashevsky explains it, an unmarked style is distinguished by its attempt "to conceal the device," whilst a marked style is one in which the techniques of composition are "laid bare" (Lemon and Reis 94)
It is obvious, as Leech and Short point out, that texts vary considerably in their degree of stylistic deviance or markedness (19). Transparency of style is by definition, an unmarked style, one which does not call attention to itself. Both syntactic and lexical choices are fundamental to style because, as Bakhtin points out: "the speaker's very selection of a particular grammatical form is a stylistic act" (Speech Genres 66) 35, and Wells's characteristic style can, therefore, be described as unmarked because in general his sentence structures are neither markedly long nor short, and he favours basic SVO and SVA constructions - the unmarked patterns (see Crystal and Davy chs. 1 and 2). Similarly, lexis tends to be simple, apart, as we have seen, for occasional archaisms and a fondness for words drawn from scientific paradigms - one contemporary review praises *Love and Mr. Lewisham* on the grounds that in that novel there are "fewer words for whose meaning one has to search the latest dictionary" (Critical Heritage 81). All of these choices contribute to the effect of directness and clarity which is achieved by Wells's best writing.

However, every writer's style establishes its own norms, and any deviation from these can be seen as marked. This is noticeable in Wells's prose when he essays passages of "fine writing" in descriptive passages - as, for instance, in the rhetorical description of the Trafford's departure from Lonely Hut in *Marriage* - or in love-scenes such as those in the closing chapters of *Ann Veronica* and *The Secret Places of the Heart*. "And if love is born," writes V.S Pritchett, "Wells is Walt Disney at his worst" (125); in such scenes, Rebecca West claims, Wells's prose suddenly loses its firmness and begins to shake like blancmange" (200). Sentences become more complex, adjectives proliferate. In these passages, then, Wells's prose can be described as stylistically marked since, by definition, it departs from its usual patterns.

35 Stylistic analysis has drawn increasingly on M.A.K Halliday's functional or systemic grammar, which depends on the notion of choice. Systemic grammar is based on the premise that language, or any part of language, is represented, in the form of "systemic networks", as "a resource for making meanings by choosing" (An Introduction to Functional Grammar xxvii) as specified by choices which have already been made and by the set of possibilities offered by the language for future choices.
b) Wells, Readership and Modernism

Wells may have had a number of reasons for favouring simplicity and directness in style, but undoubtedly the desire to reach a wide audience was one of the more important. In his dealing with publishers and agents he showed an over-riding concern with cheap editions — as he wrote to his agent, "I want to be read."36 There were probably a number of considerations underlying this aim — some, no doubt, financial — but this does not invalidate Wells’s belief in the importance of what he was saying. As I argue in Chapter Two, Wells’s concern with readership cannot be dissociated from the vast changes in education and publishing practices which were affecting all writers at the time he was establishing his literary reputation. In 1911, for instance, Edmund Gosse wrote to Wells lamenting that his own latest book, Two Visits, had "practically fallen stillborn from the press." He goes on: "R.L.S, Swinburne, Henry James, Hardy, yourself — they are worth the marketplace ten times over. But yet — ah! for human frailty — if I am to be quite sincere, I should have liked a little bit of marketplace as well!" (Letter, December 24 1911, Wells Archive). At first glance, from the vantage point of the 1990s, this seems an odd combination of names, but as Keating indicates in The Haunted Study, the whole literary scene was far less "settled" than later accounts would suggest: "Viewed retrospectively and conscious of the cultural fragmentation to come, the associations and conjunctions between novelists and periodicals at this time can appear startling"; as an instance of this, Keating records that "Conrad, Woolf and Joyce all submitted work to, and had it turned down by, Tit-Bits" (38).

36 A letter from Wells to A.P Watt, 14 Feb, 1934, quoted by David Smith, Desperately Mortal (562n). In 1928 and ’29 Wells was determined that his collaborators and publishers should ensure that the writing and marketing of The Science of Life met the tone and level, appropriate to the taste and abilities of a wide but very exactly specified audience. Huxley is castigated for having written "in a style better adapted to sedulous students than to the educated and half-educated general public" (Letter, October 3 1928, Wells Archive) and the Waverley Book Company is told that "Dignity, a certain severity" is the selling quality needed (Letter, December 4 1928, Wells Archive); "this work must not be made to look petty or peurile. What it gains among the half-wits it will lose among the intellectually eager" (Letter, December 3 1928, Wells Archive).
This was a period, then, when changes in the nature of the reading public introduced new challenges to writers, a phenomenon noted in André Gide's journal. In 1911 he records that reading the French translation of Wells's latest book has led him to conclude that: "To the famous 'three unities' I should be glad to add a fourth: the unity of audience. It would imply the importance for the poetic creation, whether a play or a book, to address itself from one end to the other of its duration to the same reader or listener" (Journals 170). He goes on to speculate that Wells's decline in popularity may be linked with an attempt to graft a more sophisticated readership on to his existing wide audience:

If he is addressing us today, why didn't he always address himself to us? Read by too large a public, which he recruited in all countries and from all social classes, he now addresses himself alternatively to people who are too different from one another. In this book there are pages that could only amuse children, or new people; other pages to interest old experienced people like us, but which would repel the former; and finally others in which he seems to be amusing only some alter ego or other; both children and I cease to listen. Occasionally I feel like pulling his sleeve: Mr Wells! You are forgetting us! And yet it was for us that you began your story... (Journals 170).

This would suggest certain inconsistencies of style in Wells's writing, and features, particularly in his polemical non-fiction, which he himself acknowledged as faults - the tendency, for instance, to repeat points too often, in almost the same words. In the introduction to Outlook for Homo Sapiens he admits that he may have been too insistent: "I hammer at my main ideas, and this is an offence to delicate-minded people" (7).

The stylistic innovations of Modernism obliged writers to decide whether they would be, in Burgess's terms, either Class 1 or Class 2

37 I am indebted to Wells's biographers, Norman and Jeanne Mackenzie, for this reference. Their conclusion, however - that Wells's attempt to build up relationships with a new set of readers showed "an instability of purpose" (276) - seems to me unlikely (276). He may, characteristically, have been attempting more than he could achieve, but his purpose - of reaching as wide a social and intellectual audience as possible - did not change.
writers, and Wells consciously and deliberately rejected what he saw as
the elitism implied by Modernist writers’ use of language. Although he
gave an appreciative review to James Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as
a Young Man*, Wells’s praise is for the vigour and realism of its scenes,
Joyce’s innovations in “paragraph and punctuation” he finds more
problematic. In general, though, he feels that while “The technique is
startling,... on the whole it succeeds” (Parrinder and Philmus 173).
Joyce’s later style, however, Wells found himself unable to endorse.38
In 1928 he wrote to say that he could not undertake to promote “Work in
Progress” because he saw its “Vast riddles” as “a dead end” (177). The
main reason for his rejection is that he sees such writing as a form of
self-indulgence limiting the range of the audience: “You have turned
your back on common men, on their elementary needs and their restricted
time and intelligence and you have elaborated.” For his own work, Wells
declares, he wants “language and statement as simple and clear as
possible” (176).39 In this very important respect, then, Wells’s oft-
disputed statement in his introduction to Geoffrey West’s biography that

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Wells’s response to the linguistic disruption favoured by
another Modernist writer, Gertrude Stein, followed the same pattern. In
1913 he wrote to thank her for sending him *Three Lives*: “At first I was
repelled by your extraordinary style,” but, he adds, “I read it with a
deepening pleasure and admiration” (Letter, January 7 1913, Wells
Archive). A few days later, he writes arranging to meet her in Paris,
and comments: “You know I think your later work insane but so also do I
judge Picasso. I know you are not insane and I have so great an
admiration and respect for *Three Lives* that I should be glad beyond
measure to hear you in your own elucidation and defence” (Letter,
January 9 1913, Wells Archive).

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This does not mean, of course, that Wells considered his own
ideas about style to be any less valid than those of the innovatory
Modernists, nor does it imply that he ever believed in writing down to
his audience, in fact he considered such a practice as in itself unacceptably elitist. He replied forcefully to a correspondent who had
suggested that *The Rights of Man* should adopt methods of “subterfuge”
in order to win over people who had difficulty understanding the
message: “I insist you must not resort to subterfuge in order to advance
our views. That is an outrage and an insult to our fellow men and an
assumption of superiority for which there is no sound justification. It
leads straight back to Fuehrerism again” (Letter to Donald Mather,
August 6 1943, Wells Archive).
he saw himself as "the absolute antithesis of Mr James Joyce" is undoubtedly true, their work is "poles asunder" both in its aim and in its approach to prose style.40 Wells satirizes what he sees as the deplorable aspects of literary Modernism in two of his later books, Boon and The Bulpington of Blup. In Boon, he presents, through the figures of the supposed author, Reginald Bliss, and the popular writer, George Boon, plans for a "conversational novel" (57) which will explore the role of literature in promoting "the Mind of the Race". The novel parodies the literary scene as a whole, but the most effective chapters attack Henry James's ideas about the novel. Bakhtin claims that "For the prose artist the world is full of other people's words, among which he must orient himself and whose speech characteristics he must be able to perceive with a keen ear" (Problems 201). In Chapter Four of Boon, "Of Art, of Literature, of Mr Henry James," Wells demonstrates his "keen ear" as he reproduces the features of James's later prose style unerringly.41 The highly metaphorical style of James's critical writing is emulated in the comments on his work: "The chief fun, the only exercise in reading Henry James," says Boon, "is this clambering over vast metaphors..." (Boon 107). Thus, James is described as lacking penetration in his fiction, as "spinning about, like the most tremendous of water-boatmen - you know

40 I have, of course, taken this statement out of its context. The preceding sentence asserts: "...I have found it amusing and profitable to write stories and - save for an incidental lapse or so - I have never taken any very great pains about writing. I am outside the hierarchy of conscious and deliberate writers altogether" (Introduction, West 13) But the fact that the accompanying statements are demonstrably untrue does not invalidate all aspects of the contrast he draws between himself and Joyce.

41 This is indicated by the number of references to James's work that have been noted. Its title and the importance given in Boon's story to houses and possessions recall The Spoils of Poynton; Edel and Ray point to resemblances to "Covering End," a short story which features the coveting of an ancient house and a Mutimer-like elderly butler described by an American visitor as "so perfectly perfect!" (The Complete Tales of Henry James 271); hints of a supernatural presence suggest a number of James's ghost stories, including The Turn of the Screw; Batchelor finds "recognizable features" of The Wings of the Dove and The Ambassadors (H.G Wells 117).
those insects? - kept up by surface tension. As if when once he pierced the surface, he would drown. It's incredible. A water boat-man as big as an elephant" (103). "The thing his novel is about," Boon claims, "is always there. It is like a church lit but without a congregation to distract you, with every light and line focused on the high altar. And on the high altar, very reverently placed, intensely there, is a dead kitten, an egg-shell, a bit of string...." (106-107). The culmination of this vast-small/important-trivial contrast comes at the end of this section, in the famous reference to James's prose style as "all for tales of nothingness":

It is a leviathan retrieving pebbles. It is a magnificent but painful hippopotamous resolved at any cost, even at the cost of its dignity, upon picking up a pea which has got into a corner of its den. Most things it insists are beyond it, but it can, at any rate, modestly, and with an artistic singleness of mind, pick up that pea...." (108).

In Boon's projected novel, "The Spoils of Mr Blandish," Wells makes use of particular features of James's later style - his fondness for interpolated adverbials, for instance, which Boon describes as "adverbial stuffing" (107)), and the "almost sentenceless conversations" which feature in his novels, with their half-phrased questions, unfinished constructions, pronouns lacking a clearly-defined reference and so on. In the representations of James's speech and in the direct quotations from Boon's novel, every paragraph is left uncompleted, trailing away in a string of dots, which suggests that they may, in Boon's terms, "sweat and struggle" on (108) indefinitely. Parody and stylization, Bakhtin suggests, require the writer to introduce the represented style "into the plane of his own discourse, but in such a way that this plane is not destroyed" (Problems 201). In Boon much of

42 In Authors and Authority, Patrick Parrinder quotes James's claim that Zola "wallowed in his material 'quite, if I may allow myself the image, as we zoologically see some mighty animal, a beast of corrugated hide and a portentous snout, soaking with joy in the warm ooze of an African riverside'" (162) and adds in parenthesis: "(How much abuse poor Wells has had to bear, for describing James in 'Boon' as a hippopotamous picking up a pea! But that was not in another country, and James (unlike Zola) was still alive.)" (162).
the humour of "The Spoils of Mr Blandish" comes, in fact, from the interaction of these two planes. Boon provides interruptions - he breaks off, for instance, after reading the lengthy introductory paragraphs of his novel, to comment: "And so at page a hundred and fifty or thereabouts we begin to get into the story" (118) - and offers footnotes and explanatory comments - "You wade through endless marshes of subtle intimation, to a sense of a presence at Samphire House" (118), and any use of clearly-worded direct diegesis (of the kind James would term "reporting") is dismissed apologetically as "Putting the thing coarsely" (126). The planes of discourse are interfused, too, in the abbreviated summaries Boon gives of effects he intends to achieve in his novel. His résumé of what is to be his "crowning chapter", for example, provides a kind of shorthand pastiche of James's mature style, which, in the space of a few lines, reminds the reader of the many pages given to the development of such subtle intimations and responses in The Turn of the Screw or The Aspern Papers:

the breakfast, a peculiar something, something almost palpable in the atmosphere - Denshman hoarse and a little talkative, Mimbleton possibly with a nervous headache, husky also and demanding tea in a thick voice, Mutimer waiting uneasily, and Mr Blandish, outwardly calm, yet noting every particular, thinking meanings into every word and movement, and growing more and more clear in his conviction that Mutimer knows - knows everything...." (124-5)

Wells's later novel, The Bulpington of Blup, which explores the development of the aesthetic consciousness before, during and after the First World War, is a sustained attack on Modernism. One of the targets is the linguistically innovative "little magazine" which played a large part in the development of the Modernist movement. After the war, Theodore Bulpington finds Paris more congenial than London, and here he becomes editor and co-owner of "a brilliantly aggressive little magazine

43 In general, James uses the word "report" (diegesis) pejoratively. Discussing a problem of perspective in one of his short stories, for instance, he points out that an easy solution would have been "to break the chain of the girl's own consciousness and report the matter quite straight and quite shamelessly" but this, he claims, would have entailed a sacrifice of intensity (The Art of the Novel 137).
called The Feet of the Young Men" (343)44, which is defined in opposition to Broxted thinking:

Teddy and his like had been all for plain and simple statements, for the coldest clearness of thought and explanation, and so by obscure reactions it came about that The Feet of the Young Men was printed entirely without punctuation marks, merely with gaps of varying length, and all the capital B's and P's put backside foremost. All the b's and p's, small and big together would have been backside foremost, only the cost of a new fount of type proved too great. And there were little droops and lifts to arrest and exercise the reader's eye. That showed what value the young men were to set on scientific lucidity so called. (344)

What is more, because "these Utopians" dreamt of a universal language and simplified English for the World State, "every number of The Feet of the Young Men had a short lyric either in argot or in Bulgarian, Estonian, Czeck, Erse or some other of the less sophisticated languages or in a mixture of them all" - and so on.

In both these novels, Wells demonstrates an assured grasp of the form and style of the Modernist novel, and he attacks with savage humour what he sees as the inaccessibility and elitism of a literary movement which he believes to be intrinsically reactionary because it has turned its back on the world of science, business and the common man. As early as 1903 Wells was calling for a literature which would enable every

44 The "little magazine" has been seen as of considerable importance to the Modernist movement (see Bradbury and Macfarlane 185-88), and Wells's parody scarcely exaggerates the innovations of some of the more avant-garde publications. Theodore's title is linked with the biblical story of Sapphira and Ananias (Acts ch. 5. 6-9), but its wording is likely to have reminded a contemporary readership of Richard Aldington's 1919 poem, "The Blood of the Young Men," in which the blood of the slain is "Trampled unseeingly by passing feet,/ Feet of the old men, feet of the cold cruel women,/ Feet of the careless children, endlessly passing...." (Images of War 60). This would not only contrast ironically with Theodore's ignominious war service but would also introduce a more scathing irony; given the nature of the magazine, and the preoccupations of Theodore and his contributors, it invites the reader to draw comparisons between the anguish and anger expressed in Aldington's poem and the intense concern shown by a very different group of young men - the Modernist poets - about feet of a very different kind - the "poetic feet" of metrics and diction.
individual to be part of the thought of the modern state, and inveighing against the artist who "lives angrily in a stuffy little corner of pure technique" (Mankind in the Making 360). Boon plans to create as the antagonist of the Mind of the Race "this artist, this man who seems to regard the whole seething brew of life as a vat from which you skim, with slow, dignified gestures, works of art" (Boon 100), and in the process, "selection becomes omission and nothing more" (Boon 104).

Wells was, then, neither ignorant of, nor out of touch with, Modernism, and he seems to have represented, for Wyndham Lewis, for example, the continuous, dogged voice of common-sense questioning the divorce between "Art" and "Life". In 1928, Lewis wrote to Wells, thanking him for his praise of Childermass. He adds: "What you say about the difficulty of the book interests me very much" then gives his view of the matter in the uncompromisingly elitist terms of high Modernism:

As to how such books can be made known to the great public, so that those for whom they are particularly destined should get hold of them, that I should say depends on many factors: one of them, the nature of the other books the author may produce - the sort of publicity he, for various reasons, gets, and then the accident of his book reaching the few people who really matter in the whole affair as early as possible" (October 3 1928, Wells Archive).

Writing from Canada during the Second World War, however, Lewis seems far less certain of his ability to identify "the few people who really matter," and is prepared to concede that he may have been wrong in his earlier view that the "elementary needs" of common man can be ignored:

When I first heard the war-drums rolling again I was immensely depressed. Our tribe had been so fearfully battered last time: and there it was, dancing that fearful dance again, and working itself up into a fever. The least I could do I felt was to discourage and obstruct, in such small way as I could: provide ridicule and sedative. But I see now that I thought too much about our tribe, too little about the "genre humain" of the revolutionary song. (July 15 1942, Lewis, Letters 334).
c) Wells, Commitment and the Dialogue Novel

Although Wells rejected the linguistic disruption favoured by many of the Modernist writers, he was, nonetheless, innovative in his search for a fictional form which would adequately fulfil his aims, and his stylistic experiments appear to be closely linked with his theory of language. As I argued in Chapter One, it is likely that early in his career Wells was strongly influenced by William James’s theory of human reasoning. Wells always links himself with systematic, scientific ways of thinking and firmly dissociates himself from what he sees as the artistic mind, with its susceptibility to vivid sense impressions rather than general analytical or synthesising principles. Although, as I pointed out, James is careful to stress that the analytic mind is not cognitively superior to the artistic, he does maintain in The Principles of Psychology that in evolutionary terms it "represents the higher stage" (2: 363) because it requires the capacity to abstract the general principle from the concrete instance, and "Men, taken historically, reason by analogy long before they have learned to reason by abstract characters" (2: 363).

Wells is always conscious of the inadequacy of the human brain - "the instrument" with which man seeks to make sense of the world - as it has so far developed, and in his visions of the future anticipates a time when human reasoning (together with the developments in language which alone can make it possible) will transcend its present limitations. If it be accepted that style is the consequence of the writer’s linguistic choices, then I would argue that Wells’s acceptance of William James’s theory had a direct effect on his subsequent writing. As early as 1902, for instance, he is explaining in a footnote to Anticipations that he has chosen to present his forecast of the future in non-fictional form because "From its very nature, and I am writing with the intimacy of one who has tried, fiction can never be satisfactory in this application" (2n). The reason he gives for this is significant:

Fiction is necessarily concrete and definite; it permits of no open alternatives; its aim of illusion prevents a proper amplitude of demonstration, and modern prophecy should be, one submits, a
branch of speculation, and should follow with all decorum the scientific method. The very form of fiction carries with it something of disavowal.... (2n)

Fiction, then, is unsatisfactory as a means of conveying speculative ideas because it is "necessarily concrete and definite." For this reason, therefore, in terms of James's theory, narrative texts are obliged to convey their meanings by means of analogy (this person in this situation is like similar persons in similar situations) which means that, by definition, fiction, together with all other art forms, represents the less advanced form of reasoning. It has to make its case, produce its argument, by piling up examples, whilst true reasoning, in James's terms, entails the abstraction from the concrete instance the feature in which it resembles other, similar instances. James acknowledges that association by similarity and true reasoning may have identical results. If a philosopher wishes to persuade you to do something, he argues, he may do so "by using abstract considerations exclusively"; the savage, in contrast, will seek to persuade you to do the same thing by pointing to similar cases in which you have done what he proposes, "and this with no ability to state the point in which the cases are similar" (Principles 2: 363). The results may be the same, but the cognitive processes by which they are achieved operate on different levels. James comments:

This offering of a similar instance instead of a reason, has often been criticised as one of the forms of logical depravity in men. But manifestly it is not a perverse act of thought, but only an incomplete one. Furnishing parallel cases is a necessary first step towards abstracting the reason embedded in them all. (2: 363-64).

In terms of this theory, therefore, the fictional form is intrinsically unsuitable for the presentation of complete thought, the exposition of the general principles which can be abstracted from the concrete instance, and Wells's admiration for James's ideas may well underlie his conclusion in Anticipations that his "sincerely intended forecast of the way things will probably go in this new century" should be couched in non-fictional form (1). "[T]he narrative form," he asserts, "becomes more and more of a nuisance as the speculative inductions become
sincerer, and here it will be abandoned altogether in favour of a texture of frank inquiries and arranged considerations" (2).

But Wells wanted to write fiction because, as he stresses in his 1911 lecture on the contemporary novel, he believed that "The novel has inseparable moral consequences," which makes it indispensable in the modern world of shifting values (An Englishman Looks at the World 158). Certainly Wells was always prepared to advance social effectiveness as a justification for literary texts, and after 1918 he regarded it as a moral imperative. In the 1924 Preface to The Research Magnificent he cites the onset of the First World War as the end of "the phase of imaginative play" in his fiction:

Thereafter there are no more books that turn on a man asking what he shall do with life. The following volumes reflect the onset of the great storm of the world war, and after that war work for the world state ceased to be a subject for discussion and exalted resolution and became as a matter of course the general form of life for a reasonable man of good will. (Preface 19: i)

Wells's commitment to his ideal of the world state and the attention he gives to effecting it - through promoting the Mind of the Race, for instance, or by means of the Open Conspiracy - have often been cited as an explanation for the change in the style of his fiction, a change which is usually dated around 1910.45 Raymond Williams, for instance, suggests that Wells "emigrated to World Government as clearly as Lawrence to Mexico" (The English Novel 104), and it is argued that an obsessive, messianic desire to convey his message led Wells to disregard the requirements of his art.46 There is, however, no reason why good

45 See Mackenzies, The Time Traveller 276-77; Draper, H.G Wells 97, 102; Parrinder, H.G Wells 86; Borrello 118. John Batchelor, cites 1910 as the year when Wells "had a new and unpleasant experience; he was unable to find a publisher for a new novel" (H.G Wells 94).

46 The Mackenzies, for example, seem to believe that imagination and creativity cannot co-exist with a sense of purpose: "His fiction became simply the vehicle for his evangelism, and his imagination began to wither in the pulpit....He could never dedicate himself single-mindedly to his fiction. He had always been haunted by his sense of mission, and with the collapse of his literary aspirations he fell back into the abiding concern of his life - the salvation of mankind" (279-80).
writing and political commitment should be seen as mutually
exclusive, and, in fact, many writers consider it a prerequisite for an
effective style.47 I would suggest that it is not "commitment" in
itself which determined the form of much of Wells's later fiction, but
the conflict between his belief in the effectiveness of the novel as an
agent of social change, and his equally strong conviction that the
fictional mode of necessity exemplified a "lower" form of reasoning
which precluded the logical presentation of general relationships and
system.

This conflict had an effect on Wells's writing in two main ways.
It involved him in a search for a fictional form which could bring
together the concrete example and the generalized principle, and it also
- most probably without his conscious awareness - affected his style,
the linguistic choices, which characterize his later writing. Not only
was Wells often criticized for being too abstract and didactic in his
later fiction, he was also taken to task for rendering abstract ideas in
too concrete a way in his non-fictional writing. In the early 1940s,
Wells asked the philosopher, L. Susan Stebbing, to comment on the
argument in The Conquest of Time. She made detailed comments on the
book, and in her first (eight page) letter she writes: "I will mention
first what is for me, from the philosophical point of view most natural
to me, my main difficulty - namely, your habit of personifying
abstractions, using eg. life, man, the species, as the subject of a
singular verb"; and later in this letter she reiterates the point: "I
realize that one of my deepseated prejudices is a passionate dislike of
personified abstractions," but, she adds, even allowing for that, "and
for the danger of letting myself see vicious abstractions where there
are abstractions that are not vicious but only vivid, I still think that
your argument is vitiated by your manner of speaking, which does present
your way of thinking" (Letter, December 14 1941, Wells Archive).

47 Shaw maintains that "'for art's sake' alone" he would not "face
the toil of writing a single line," and adds, "Effectiveness of
assertion is the Alpha and Omega of style" (Preface Man and Superman
xxxvii). Sartre argues that the whole idea of "pure" art is in itself a
political stance: "aesthetic purism was a brilliant manoeuvre of the
bourgeois of the last century who preferred to see themselves denounced
as philistines rather than as exploiters" (What is Literature? 17).
Wells's dissatisfaction with accepted methods of literary composition began, therefore, long before 1910. In a review of 1897 he was praising Gissing as the first English novelist to break away from the novel of incident — in the nineteenth century, Wells argues, "plot grew at last to be the curse of English fiction" (Parrinder and Philmus 145). Gissing broke away also from the novel of character where, as in Hardy, Wells claims, there is too much emphasis on "the local and personal" (Parrinder and Philmus 68) in order to present, like the great continental novelists, "a group of typical individuals at the point of action of some great social force, the social force in question and not the 'hero' and 'heroine' of the story being the real operative interest of the story" (Parrinder and Philmus 145). In such a novel the "concrete and definite" is transcended, but not, as for the Naturalists, for the sole aim of achieving scientific objectivity. For Wells the emphasis on the social rather than the individual served an ideological purpose since it gave scope for "higher reasoning", the discussion of ideas between what William James terms "minds of a high order, interested in kindred subjects" (Principles 2: 370).

In *A Modern Utopia* (1905), Wells set out to create a new form capable of marrying these two aims. In his Note to the Reader, Wells explains that he has attempted "a sort of shot-silk texture between philosophical discussion on the one hand and imaginative narrative on the other" (viii). He does not succeed because, as Parrinder points out (H.G Wells 91), the imaginative element (the introduction of two created characters to observe and comment on the "other world" of Utopia), is swamped by the sociological and philosophical comment. Nonetheless, the explanation Wells gives of his aim in the book is illuminating. The italicised section at the beginning comments on the book's form: "The entertainment before you is neither the set drama of the work of fiction you are accustomed to read, nor the set lecturing of the essay you are accustomed to evade, but a hybrid of these two" (1-2), and a similar passage at the end anticipates a challenge from the reader about the need for an invented character, the Owner of the Voice, as narrator — "But why was he intruded? you ask. Why could not a modern Utopia be discussed without this impersonation - impersonally?" (258). The answer is that a vision of Utopia requires that the immediate vision of the
individual human being be brought together with "a comprehensive scheme, in which these personalities float, the scheme of a synthetic wider being, the great State, mankind, in which we all move and go, like blood corpuscles" (259) and, the narrator comments, the two visions cannot be held in focus at the same time, and (in a passage which I quoted in relation to Wells's sociological thinking in Chapter Two) he comments: "Nevertheless, I cannot separate these two aspects of human life, each commenting on the other. In that incongruity between great and individual inheres the incompatibility I could not resolve, and which therefore, I have had to present in this conflicting form" (259).

Arguably this is an incompatibility which Wells never resolves. In Experiment in Autobiography, he claims that it took some years of "experiments and essays in statement" before he realised that he was feeling his way "towards something outside any established formula for the novel altogether" (497), which he describes as the discussion or dialogue novel. Commenting on this form Wells writes:

In all these novels the interest centres not upon the individual character, but upon the struggles of common and rational motives and frank enquiry against social conditions and stereotyped ideas. The actors in them are types rather than acutely individualized persons. They could not be other than types. (477)

In such novels, he argues, acutely individualized persons would be a distraction, and, in any case, Wells sees nothing wrong with "type" figures in a novel. In fact, in an 1896 review of Turgenev, Wells had described his "novel of types" as "the highest form of literary art" (Parrinder and Philmus 70), and he praises the Russian novelist's ability to make his characters appear both typical and individual at the same time: "Turgenev people are not avatars of theories nor tendencies. They are living, breathing individuals living under the full stress of this great social force or that" (Parrinder and Philmus 68).48

48 Wells uses the word "type" to refer to human-beings as social constructs, shaped by particular cultures and environments. In a late essay, he dismisses the idea that world education would abolish varieties of mankind: "On the contrary, it will preserve them. Every soil insists on its own types, just as it insists upon its own wines" ('42-'44 133).
Over forty years later, Wells’s defence of the dialogue novel in “The Novel of Ideas” shows that he still sees this presentation of the discourse of typical human figures as both a necessary and an achievable aim for a novel which sets out to address ideas. It is necessary because “very early, men realised the impossibility of abstracting any philosophy of human behaviour from actual observable flesh and blood. As soon as you tear a brain away from its blood and membranes: it dies” (Babes 6). Thus, the dialogue form is “one of the oldest forms of literary expression,” because although abstract philosophy may seem dull “The Socratic Dialogue on the other hand produces character after character to state living views, to have them ransacked by an interlocutor who is also a character, subject to all the infirmities of the flesh. Plato’s dramas of the mind live to this day” (Babes 6-7). The aim is seen as achievable in literary terms because the characters in Babes in the Darkling Wood, for instance, have been chosen as types appropriate to the philosophical material of the novel (“I could not devise a more favourable assemblage of personalities for a modern symposium, or I would have done so” Babes 9).

I am not suggesting that Wells succeeds in these aims in all his dialogue novels, but I would challenge the claim that his search for a new fictional form — and his justifications of it — are retrospective rationalizations, ascribable to a realization in mid-career that he had failed as a novelist. Both the recognition of a need for an “ampier form,” and an awareness of the reasons for it, are the logical outcome.

49 The Mackenzies claim: “By 1911 he had come to realise that he was incapable of writing fiction that was comparable to the work of James and Conrad, or even Bennett and Galsworthy, and that he was perpetually at a disadvantage if he allowed himself to be measured by their standards. It was necessary for him to make up his own rules and thus free himself of the nagging complaints that he failed as an artist. If he was to be attacked for allowing the frame to get into the picture, he would at least offer some justification for his fascination with the frame” (277).

50 This phrase comes from the Preface to Joan and Peter (23: x), in which Wells hopes that there will some day be some appreciation of the “ampier form” of such novels. He claims that “There has existed up to the present no way of differentiating between the ordinary novel which develops the narrative interest of an incident, a situation, or a simple relationship, and the novel with a wider intention” (x).
of the developments in his thinking about language and expression which were taking place during the 1890s. In his autobiography he claims to have become increasingly interested as a novelist in "the interior conflict, this controversial matter stewing and fermenting in all our brains" (495), and it is clear from his comments on the subject that Wells struggled with the technical problem of how to represent the thought processes of his characters. He admits that in novels such as Marriage and The Wife of Sir Isaac Harmon he had made his characters "indulge in impossibly explicit monologues and duologues" (Autobiography 495), and in his essay, "The Novel of Ideas," he indicates that he does not favour the interior monologue - Ann Veronica, he feels "soliloquises and rhapsodises incessantly" (Babes 8) because she has no-one to argue with. He is opposed to Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Richardson's "flow of consciousness' technique" by which "personalities are supposed to be stippled out by dabs of response" (10) and points out that since these too have to be verbalized, this method is intrinsically no less conventional and no more a representation of actual verbal behaviour than its opposite, the "magnification and clarification" (Babes 10) of speech which is required by the discussion novel. It was, therefore, Wells claims, the stylistic difficulties of depicting "interior conflict" that led him to the dialogue form "through a process of trial and error....As I felt about rebelliously among the possibilities of fiction, I found certain of my characters were displaying an irresistible tendency to break out into dissertation" (Babes 7). Wells frequently cites as his models W.H Mallock and Peacock, both successful exponents of the dialogue novel, and in the nineteen twenties and thirties, Aldous Huxley, too, had been exploring with considerable success the possibilities of the form in satirical novels such as Point Counterpoint (1928). I would agree with William Warren Wagar's view that

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51 In 1928, in response to a letter from Mrs Christabel McLaren, asking for guidance on literary techniques, Wells writes: "Dear Neophyte there are no rules or customs for handling things like trains of thought. We all develop our own little dodges. Meredith (and cf Galsworthy who has pages of Soames Forsyte's reflections) James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson, do thought trains with skill and elaboration. Personally I never use inverted commas unless speech occurs. Single inverted commas for a quotation" (Letter, September 15 1928; Aberconway Correspondence, British Museum Manuscript Room).
"there was nothing indefensible about Wells's purposes even from the purely literary point of view" (262), but would challenge his implied conclusion that the purposes were never achieved: "His failure," writes Wagar, "was rather one of execution" (262). As we have already seen, in his dialogue novels Wells explores a number of narrative devices for resolving the "incongruity between the great and the individual" (A Modern Utopia 259), and perhaps the most effective of these is the use of quasi-direct or free-indirect discourse, which, in Volosinov's terms, establishes a "dynamic interrelationship" (134) between the narrator and the principal character. In Chapter Four I argued that double-voicedness is central to the effect of The Bulpington of Blup, and it plays a large part, too, in one of Wells's last novels, The Holy Terror. As in The Bulpington of Blup, the dialogue takes place between the characters and between the hero and the narrator. The book traces the development of Rud Whitlow from an unpleasant little boy into a Hitler-like totalitarian dictator whose power is based largely on his rhetorical skills. In the following passage, which is typical of the style of the novel, Rud is thinking about the possibilities offered by political leadership. He decides that "communism, fascism and all that - they are nearly played out - they are three-parts dead":

And then it was as if the door slammed again.

"If they're all out," he whispered. "And if there is a right way --

"They haven't got it. Any of them....

"But if one did get it!"

He seemed to see the confusion suddenly crystallising under the spell of a magic word - some missing elusive word - surely he had had it quite plain only a moment before! - and in his reverie, he it was who had shouted that word. And now it had gone. Gone altogether.

What was it? The missing Sesame?...

What was it? What was it?

There was an extraordinary blackness upon the sunlit meadows and the steel-blue, winding Cramb.... (The Holy Terror 51)

As in the earlier novel, much of the text is an exploration of the hero's consciousness by means, as in this passage, of a mixture of
narratorial commentary, direct speech and free indirect discourse. What is striking is that in the two books in which the heroes' world-views are most diametrically opposed to those of their creator - Theodore Bulpington a reactionary aesthete, Rud Whitlow a ruthless fascist demagogue - Wells should have employed a narrational mode which has the effect of narrowing the distance between the discourse of the character and that of the author. As Bakhtin/Volosinov makes clear, such interfusion is an integral part of this mode of presentation because the author's/narrator's voice becomes part of the dialogic process. This means that the reader is always aware of two voices: "almost every word in the narrative... figures simultaneously in two intersecting contexts, two speech acts: in the speech of the author-narrator (ironic and mocking) and the speech of the hero (who is far removed from irony)" (Volosinov 136). This means that in these dialogue novels the general principle ("the great") and the concrete instance ("the individual") are brought together in an open-ended, non-didactic way. We are certainly aware of the author's attitude towards Modernism and fascism, but at the same time, the conflicting voice of the hero is neither wholly silenced nor negated.

Conclusion
Recent theories of language and of literature, particularly those of Bakhtin and Volosinov which stress the inherently social and historical nature of all language use - and thus of all literary forms - are now far more in tune with Wells's theory of language and his practice as a novelist. It was Wells's belief in the social purpose of literature which brought him into conflict with Henry James and the Modernist writers, who saw the novel as an art form, a means of expressing and preserving a "true" and "enduring" reality. Like a picture, James claims, a novel "makes life" by representing it in artistic form. A picture, however, must have a frame and for Wells the very idea of a frame represents constraint, restrictions on the novel which are no longer suitable in a rapidly changing world. In Experiment in Autobiography he uses the image to explain the ways in which social change has been reflected in fiction - "the splintering frame began to get into the picture" (495) - and, he adds, "I suppose for a time I was
the outstanding instance among writers of fiction in English of the frame getting into the picture" (495). Wells's insistence that the form of the novel should not be prescribed in advance since it must deal with "Impermanent realities" (504), is reflected in Bakhtin's assertion in "Epic and the Novel" that the novel is the only genre which is not, and can never be, circumscribed by an established formula. Its social and historical development, he argues, has ensured that the only defining characteristic of the novel is its lack of a fixed form:

It is by its very nature non-canonic. It is plasticity itself. It is a genre that is ever questing, ever examining itself and subjecting its established forms to review. Such, indeed, is the only possibility open to a genre that structures itself in a zone of direct contact with developing reality. (Dialogic 39).

Similarly, where Modernist approaches to the language of the novel encourage the reader to look for metaphoric richness and opacity, the work of Bakhtin and Volosinov has drawn attention to the subtleties to be found in the metonymic, linear prose of classic realist writing. If, as Bakhtin claims, dialogism is a fundamental property of all non-poetic language use, a property which can be exploited by the novelist through double-voiced discourse - particularly by devices such as stylization and parody - then a number of Wells's later texts achieve a considerable measure of dialogism without disrupting the linguistic structures of the realist text. The Dream, for instance, sets up a dialogue by means of the distance established between the main story and the framing text, whilst in Christina Alberta's Father the sub-text provides intriguing paradigmatic levels of interpretation. In fact, whenever the voice of the other is freed in the text, whether it be in the interaction of...

52 In the Preface to Roderick Hudson, James claims that the "painter's" (novelist's) subject consists always "of the related state, to each other, of certain figures and things" (5). But, he adds, since such relations "stop nowhere" the artist's problem is "eternally but to draw, by a geometry of his own, the circle within which they shall happily appear to do so" (5). In a later Preface, James returns to this idea: "though the relations of a human figure or a social occurrence are what makes such objects interesting, they also make them, to the same tune, difficult to isolate, to surround with the sharp black line, to frame in the square, the circle, the charming oval, that helps any arrangement of such objects to become a picture" (The Art of the Novel 101).
narrative levels in *The Research Magnificent* and *The Croquet Player*, the interplay of literary styles in *Mr Blettsworthy in Rampole Island*, or, above all, in the double-voicedness which characterizes the discourse of *The Bulpington of Blup*. Wells's novels achieve a considerable measure of dialogism or polysemy, and his style is comparable with that of his earlier writing.

In 1972, Patrick Parrinder wrote in his introduction to H.G. Wells: *the Critical Heritage* that although for a long time the climate of opinion had been against Wells's fiction, "The vagaries of critical fashion may also now be working in Wells's favour" (29). Twenty years on, this has proved to be the case. So far as cultural formations are concerned, while the Modernist aesthetic ran counter to Wells's practice as a writer in almost every respect, post-structuralist theories reach conclusions not far removed from his ideas about texts as "experiments in statement" (General Preface xviii). Perhaps, therefore, I should end with a reference though apparently minor feature of Wells's style, his frequent use of aposiopesis, the rhetorical signifier of incompletion. The way in which many of Wells's sentences trail away in a string of dots sums up, in a sense, Wells's approach to language and its capabilities. Perhaps the only thing of which he was certain throughout his literary career was the provisional nature of all statement: "We are all things that make and pass...." (*Tono-Bungay* 493).

53 In a letter to Lord Alfred Douglas, Shaw claims: "H.G. Wells found out the value of dots, but makes only one use of them" (Bernard Shaw and Alfred Douglas 49). But this is to undervalue this feature of Wells's writing. Certainly he does use the device in the conventional way, to suggest lack of closure and as an implication that there is more to be said, but, as I have indicated, in particular contexts this in itself can play an important part in conveying aspects of character and motivation, and even of parody.
APPENDIX

A Stylometric Comparison of *The Time Machine* and *The Croquet Player* with Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

In Chapter Five I argued that Wells's criteria for linguistic choices - precision, directness and accessibility - and his desire for clarity of expression resulted in a characteristic way of writing. In order to test this hypothesis, I have made a stylometric analysis of particular features of Wells's style. One of Wells's earliest texts, *The Time Machine* (1895), is compared with one of his latest, *The Croquet Player* (1937), and both are compared with Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902). Leech and Short point out that "Some kind of comparison outside the text or corpus is necessary, otherwise statements of frequency are vacuous" (51), and a comparison with Conrad seemed an appropriate choice, since Wells, throughout his life, saw Conrad's approach to style as diametrically opposed to his own. In his 1896 review of Conrad's first novel, *An Outcast of the Islands*, Wells identifies what he describes as one "glaring fault" in the writing: "Mr Conrad," he claims, "is wordy; his story is not so much told as seen intermittently through a haze of sentences" (Parrinder and Philmus 88). With this comment in mind, I decided to compare the three texts in relation to four stylistic markers:

1. Sentence length.
2. Sentence complexity.
3. Word length.
4. Syllable length.

These features, of course, constitute only a fraction of the total number of indicators which could be considered as stylistically salient, but as Halliday points out, although "The figures alone, obviously, do not constitute an analysis, interpretation, or evaluation of style," they can provide evidence for supporting an intuitive impression. In fact, he claims: "A rough indication of frequencies is often just what is needed: enough to suggest why we should accept the analyst's assertion that some feature is prominent in the text, and to allow us to check his statements" ("Linguistic Function and Literary Style" 339).
Conclusions

1 On one of these measures, sentence length, there is a statistically significant and therefore important difference between the three texts, as is indicated in Table A.

2 Although the differences between sentence complexity in the three texts are interesting, they are not large enough to be significant in statistical terms (possibly because the indicators chosen are insufficiently precise to establish the full range of complex sentences). See Table B.

3 Contrary to my expectations, comparison of word length and syllable length showed no significant difference, either between early and late Wells, or between Wells and Conrad. See Table C.

The fact that The Time Machine has a mean average sentence length significantly higher than Heart of Darkness is surprising – although the number of complex sentences in the Conrad story is also higher (even on the inadequate stylistic criteria provided). The Time Machine is, however, generally regarded as one of the most metaphorical and mythopoeic of Wells's texts. It is interesting to note that The Croquet Player, written towards the end of Wells's career, is markedly different in sentence length (over 50% of the sentences in this story consist of 10 words or less; 79.57% contain fewer than 20 words).

The discovery of a significant difference on such a major feature as sentence length is encouraging, because it supports the impression that the style of Wells's later fiction moves towards greater simplicity in his attempt to achieve clarity. For future analysis, I plan to compare a later Conrad text (The Shadow Line, 1916) with The Croquet Player to test whether a similar change is evident. I intend also find more extensive indicators of hypotaxis in order to make a more detailed analysis of sentence complexity.
## TABLE A: SENTENCE LENGTH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of words per sentence</th>
<th>The Time Machine</th>
<th>Heart of Darkness</th>
<th>Croquet Player</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-10</td>
<td>29.91%</td>
<td>39.29%</td>
<td>50.32%</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>35.23%</td>
<td>27.34%</td>
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<td>0%</td>
</tr>
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<td>0.12%</td>
<td>0.13%</td>
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<td>101-110</td>
<td>0.09%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
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<td>111-121</td>
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<td><strong>16.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>13.6</strong></td>
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<td><strong>+ 0.60</strong></td>
<td><strong>+ 0.86</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>STANDARD DEVIATION</strong></td>
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<td><strong>14.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.0</strong></td>
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TABLE B: SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

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<th>Croquet Player</th>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unless</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE C: WORD LENGTH AND SYLLABLE LENGTH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Word Lengths in Time</th>
<th>Word Lengths in Heart</th>
<th>Word Lengths in Croquet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 0 0.0%</td>
<td>0 0 0.0%</td>
<td>0 0 0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 1039</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>1 2155 5.7%</td>
<td>1 626 6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 2817</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>2 6708 17.8%</td>
<td>2 1951 19.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 3874</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>3 8379 22.3%</td>
<td>3 2106 21.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 3102</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>4 6853 18.2%</td>
<td>4 1918 18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 1888</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>5 4473 11.9%</td>
<td>5 1118 11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 1425</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>6 2862 7.6%</td>
<td>6 725 7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 1186</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>7 2467 6.6%</td>
<td>7 577 5.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 770</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>8 1486 3.9%</td>
<td>8 385 3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 558</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>9 1028 2.7%</td>
<td>9 316 3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 378</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>10 694 1.8%</td>
<td>10 211 2.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 156</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>11 293 0.8%</td>
<td>11 85 0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 140</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>12 160 0.4%</td>
<td>12 46 0.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 52</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>13 74 0.2%</td>
<td>13 31 0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 24</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>14 34 0.1%</td>
<td>14 11 0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 6</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>15 6 0.0%</td>
<td>15 3 0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 4</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>16 9 0.0%</td>
<td>16 1 0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.2</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Std</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Syllable Lengths in Time</th>
<th>Syllable Lengths in Heart</th>
<th>Syllable Lengths in Croquet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 8</td>
<td>0.05%</td>
<td>0 16 0.04%</td>
<td>0 8 0.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 12384</td>
<td>71.06%</td>
<td>1 27526 73.03%</td>
<td>1 7336 72.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 3125</td>
<td>17.93%</td>
<td>2 6723 17.84%</td>
<td>2 1770 17.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 1335</td>
<td>7.66%</td>
<td>3 2519 6.68%</td>
<td>3 684 6.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 435</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
<td>4 752 2.00%</td>
<td>4 232 2.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 132</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
<td>5 142 0.38%</td>
<td>5 42 0.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 8</td>
<td>0.05%</td>
<td>6 13 0.03%</td>
<td>6 6 0.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.44</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.39</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.40</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Std</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.81</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.74</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.76</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Most polysyllabic word:**

- The Time Machine: "particularly why" at line 62 *
- Heart of Darkness: affectionately at line 14
- The Croquet Player: imperturbably at line 189

**Longest word:**

- The Time Machine: "reaction possibly" at line 591 *
- Heart of Darkness: "incomprehensible" at line 146
- The Croquet Player: "psychotherapeutist" at line 207

* Each text had to be edited "by hand"; human error has resulted in the odd anomaly of this kind.
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